UKRAINE – COUNTRY REPORT: WHERE ARE WE MARCHING TO?

Olga A. Akimova
Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas,
Sevastopol, Crimea,
Ukraine.
akimova@ibss.iuf.net

This report is a logical sequel of the report presented in Aberdeen. It describes the work done for the past year and activities to be undertaken further. It also gives a few ideas about the trends small Ukrainian libraries should follow and develop.

Last year an event of special significance was our active participation in the training organized by the British Council Foundation in cooperation with International Renaissance Foundation within the format of the project *"Management in the Library."* The programme concentrates on giving training to trainers to disseminate knowledge at the regional level; providing information support for management through publication of the British Institute of Management books *"Management in a week"*; developing the virtual training centre *"Knowledge Centre"* and Internet Information portal. Thirty libraries from 14 Ukrainian regions became participants of the Programme, a representative from Scientific Library of IBSS NASU was among them.

It was stipulated by the Programme that training seminars for librarians should be organized and conducted at the regional level. Therefore, from January to May 4 sessions and consultations were held in the library of IBSS for librarians of scientific, marine and university libraries. The purpose of the training seminars was to inform participants about the current practices in library management. The training will be the last this year.

Our vision of the future

During the year covered we worked out the programme of further development of our scientific library and marine libraries of Ukraine. In doing this task we studied and analyzed the current trends of development of libraries in Russia and Ukraine.

Numerous facts given in periodicals point out that a trend has emerged towards transformation of libraries into information centres, activities of which would be based primarily on information analysis. Therefore the main task of the library would be data collection, processing, keeping and disseminating in electronic forms. The creation and availability of the digital databases (virtual libraries) would lessen the load on the libraries' book collections. The number of users will be growing with the advancement of technical progress, accessibility to Internet, enlargement of electronic publications services and efficiency (e.g. document search and delivery). Libraries would be losing readers, they would also run the risk of losing significance as a key unit in the world of

information in which basic information fluxes would assume an electronic form, but if the libraries incorporated digitization into their daily routine, it would guarantee them safe and even comfortable living.

The intended work divided into several assignments, which must be carried out concurrently:

1. offering readers the access to digital publications beyond the library. This can be done through providing access to Internet and offering expert advice about information search in cyberspace. Then the library would still be functioning as an information mediator;

2. presenting original information stored at the library as a service to Internet users. This should be implemented through creation of the libraries web servers with useful information including the libraries electronic catalogues and papers in digital form. The next step would be the development of efficient electronic delivery: chapters and sections of books, articles from periodicals might be dispatched to a remote reader that way. In other words, services to be provided by the real libraries through the electronic communication net must be demanded and able to compete with services provided by virtual information agencies.

European libraries have probably come close to the venture; for Ukraine this is a matter for the very distant future.