UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS – VARNA:
95 YEARS OF TRADITION AND PROGRESS

Rositsa Zarkova
Director, University library

Introduction

For each university its library is a centre of spirit for keeping the literary and intellectual wealth of tens of generations and documentary sources which tell about the history, economy, social life, educational and scientific activities of the institution, the city and the state. The rich library resources, collections and information data, the ambiance and services offered to readers and users, the popularity of and visits to the library also have their significant contribution for the level of scientific researches, the training and professional preparation of the under-graduate and graduate students as a result of the good image of the university. In the course of its almost one-hundred-year long history the sustainable and ascending development of the library of UE-Varna is the result of the ever-lasting conviction in the leading role of the library and the constant efforts of generations of far-sighted scholars and visionaries who managed the university through the years.

1. Short history of the library in the period 1920 - 2010

The Higher School of Commerce in Varna, whose descendant is the University of Economics, was established on May 14 1920, and the library was the first independent sector in it. As early as the first report – a suggestion for establishing HSC, in an estimate of the necessary funds, they planned a sum of money for the library. The initial collection of the library was inherited by the Comprehensive high school of commerce (about 6000 volumes), after books were bought with the money provided while establishing the school and with money from a donation (50 000 levs) by the rich merchant and former chairman of the Varna chamber of industry and commerce Petar G. Petrovich. Thus the library began its function with a collection of 10 000 volumes and the first librarian (keeper) was Arkadi Stoyanov. In the beginning, a large part of the book collection was written in foreign languages, the books came from donations from Germany, France, England and Italy. There was scarce literature in Bulgarian; the library received mainly papers and protocols of the Varna chamber of commerce and industry, as well as annual reports, issues of the Head directorship...
of statistics, newspapers and magazines. Later papers of the first professors in HSC started coming, such as Tsani Kalyandzhiev, Stancho Cholakov, Valchin Gerilovski, Naoum Dolinski, Yanaki Arnaudov, Boycho Boychev and others. In the period 1939-43 Boncho Yankoulev and Atanas Nikiforov worked as librarians and Vasilka Sakazova was the bookkeeper. At that time to the library collection there were added the book collections of the libraries of the French and German High schools and the Chamber of commerce and industry.

The Revolution of 9.09.1944 found the library with a collection of more than 30 000 volumes which made it necessary to hire more staff and make specific organization for presenting and using the books.

In implementing the governmental policy for decentralization of higher education in 1945, new universities were established in the cities of Varna and Plovdiv. The Higher school of commerce was transformed into the Varna State University with two faculties – industry and technology. This also had an impact on the development of the library and forming its collection of books and periodicals.

In 1945 Todor Popiliev was appointed keeper in the library, and in 1946 four more regular librarians were hired (Todorova, 1980). The books available in the library were listed on catalogue cards and arranged in a catalogue – this being the start of organized library collection and its presentation in catalogues.

Since establishing the university library, the academic authorities tracked its development carefully, taking into consideration its role in the academic and scientific-and-research process. At the meeting on May 8 1946 the Academic Council ratified “Rules for organising the university library”. In paragraph 1 of the Rules, the library was defined as a “scientific-supportive institute for servicing academic knowledge inside and outside the university”. At the same meeting Ivan Moutafov was chosen for caretaker of the library (Tsonev, 1988).

The new items in the academic year 1945/46 were more than 10 000 volumes, and in 1948 the collection increased with 11 800 ones, yet, the library was still located in the university basement. As early as 1946, in his report to the Rector, Todor Popiliev seriously raised the issue about the location of the library, as well as the bad conditions under which the books were kept and the 7 librarians worked. As a result of this and the actions of the authorities that followed, in the 1948 budget the government granted a credit for erecting another building for the university library (Tsonev, 1980), where they could keep 200 000 volumes and the reading rooms could seat 300 readers. In 1948 the construction had not started yet, being postponed for the future, thus it was neglected for good. In November 1948 in order to solve the issues of the university library, at least partially, the auditorium and its adjoining room of the First medium high school were given to the library to use, but this made the distance between the university and
the library too long and didn’t help the library to fulfil its functions in providing and supporting the academic process. Despite this fact, at that time the library had a fund of more than 60 000 volumes and the richest collection of economic reference books in the country (more than 30 000 items) (Bliznakov, 1948).

In 1949 Ivan Moutafov was appointed director of the university library. He was an exceptional erudite and specialist, with an extra education in bibliography and library studies in the Sorbonne (Bliznakov, 1948). He made a lot of efforts for the professional development of the library and its affirmation as a leading economic library in Bulgaria. In the same year the first prospective library plan was designed for the period 1949 – 1953, and then the Rules for library activities were accepted and updated. It stipulated for the first time the establishment of 5 library divisions: 1. Making sets of books and international book exchange, 2. Catalogues and systematization of the book collection, 3. Science and bibliography, 4. Servicing the academic and teaching university staff and the students, together with keeping the book collection, 5. Faculty and institutional libraries.

The university library is among the first to spread library and bibliographic knowledge in the country. In the academic year 1945/46 a special bibliographic seminar was given by Prof. Todor Borov – then a famous expert-bibliographer. He delivered specially designed lectures in book knowledge, library studies, bibliography and journalism.

In 1953 the reference- bibliographic division of the library was established (Panayotov, 1972). Its main task is to help the scientific-and-research activities and the academic work with catalogues and written bibliographic references. To fulfil the functions of the library division a suitable reference apparatus was available – a reference library collection with factual and bibliographic manuals (specified in separate sets), a card-index system whose aim is to fully reveal the library items in various aspects, as well as analytical presentation of the periodicals the library received.

In 1953 the Varna State University was closed and its Economic faculty was transformed into the Higher Institute of People’s Economy (HIPE). The same year they moved the library to the university main building, on the top floor of the newly erected extension. These changes led to a serious reorganisation of the library items – part of the technical literature, available for servicing the technical specialties in VSU, was set aside and sent to technical higher schools, the fiction in foreign-languages was given to the language highs schools in the city of Varna and Sofia University, later – to the University of Veliko Tarnovo as well. In 1963-1971 the library functioned as the Central library of HIPE and the newly established Higher Institute of Machine and Electrics (HIME) in Varna (Todorova, 1980). With its books
the library helped methodically and materially in setting up the HIPE library. Since 1972 the library has been developing as an independent academic library with economic profile in HIPE. Ivan Moutafov was its director from 1949 until 1974, and assistants who worked then were: Todor Panayotov, Lili Avramova, Vanya Kancheva, Katya Karamfilova, Nadezhda Stefanova, Hristina Yordanova, Ginka Minkova and others (Todorova, 1980).

In November 1974 Anka Todorova was appointed director of the university library. As a result of the specific way of organising work in the library and the processes of servicing library users, the specialised divisions had to be developed and restructured. Three of them remained: Making sets of books, Processing and catalogues, Servicing and book collection, Reference-and-bibliography and information. In this period of time special attention was paid again to acquiring new literature and enriching the library collection as a whole. It included as many as 200,000 volumes. Keeping and enlarging book exchange with foreign universities and institutions went on, the reference-bibliographic activity like information servicing, publishing and user training developed intensely.

The university library was among the first in Bulgaria which started planning, preparation and implementing activities in automatisation of library processes as early as the beginning of 1980s. Work on the book electronic catalogue started with the ISIS programming product, provided for free to Bulgarian libraries by UNESCO. They started to enter all titles available in the library from the beginning of 1989. Later, in retrospect, they entered the books that the library received in 1984-1988. Since 1987 in the library a terminus station has been functioning, which is used for work and search in the International social studies information system (ISCIS) at ISISS (Institute for social studies of the Russian AS (Academy of science). Thus was set the beginning of automatized cataloguing and information servicing in the library.

Together with this, the 1980s were the time when the construction for enlarging the university building (top floor extension) started, where new large, modern and spacious rooms for the library were designed – book loan service, reading-room and separate book depository in the basement. In 1988 the top floor extension was put into practice, together with the new reading-room seating 140 visitors. Shortly after that, in 1990 they started using the rooms for the new book-loan service, the offices of the remaining library divisions, and in 1994 the book depositories. At that time the library staff was largest, for ex. in 1988 25 assistants worked in the library (16 of them with higher education).

In 1995 Temenouga Tsaneva was appointed director of the university library. In respect to international projects a period of intensive work for the staff began. As a result of these projects automatisation of the library processes with newly available
technology and software developed and the qualification of the library experts increased. The first implemented projects were part of “Open society”, the British Council and the TEMPUS programme. Due to those projects the library received funds to purchase technology (computers, barcode readers, CD-ROM device, printers, software and CD database). As part of the British Council project and the projects of the Departments of “Informatics” and “Economy of tourism” in 1997 in the Information-and-bibliography division the first computer station with Internet connection was installed. At the end of 1995-199 term of office the library AIS (automatized information system) included a server and 15 working stations, 3 of them with Internet access. In November 1996 and April 1997 with funds from an international TEMPUS-programme project 12 library specialists had staff exchange mobility in the libraries of the European college in Bruges, Belgium and the Economic University in Vienna, Austria.

In 1998 the Book-loan service was moved to a converted lounge on the fifth floor, thus overcoming the lack of comfort in the divisions for compiling literature, the depository for new literature and the book-loan service located on different floors. Besides, in this period of time the first steps were made for readers to subscribe and have access to electronic database – bibliographic and full-text. Since 1998 based on subscription, the library received electronically the database “Books” and “Articles” with the national papers issued by the CMNL (SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library). With the financial help of the “Open society” foundation and the alliance of university libraries of the Bulgarian information consortium (BIC) for the first time in 1999 there were subscribed and provided for access the full-text database of EBSCO – an exceptionally rich world electronic resource. In 2000 they started the subscription for the legal-information SIELA system. Since 1997 the library has been chosen for depository library of the issues of the World Bank and receives them for free, processes them and presents in an electronic catalogue for free access in the reading-room.

In 2000-2003 two more international projects were implemented in the library: the first was part of the Swiss programme for scientific studies SCOPES, under which the library received 15 new computers, a scanner, a server, a Zerox machine, network software, thus improving considerably the efficiency of work of the local network. The second project was under the guidance of the World Bank and MES (Ministry of education and science), mutual work with the participation of 6 university libraries in North-Eastern Bulgaria. With project funds the library received 60 book stands, the internet page was updated, and the electronic catalogue was presented on Internet with a new, more modern interface thus becoming part of the Reference catalogue of libraries in North-Eastern Bulgaria.
From June 2003 until April 2005 Bistra Stambolova was director of the university library. In the fall of 2004 the Library Council made the decision to purchase new library software – sophisticated, easier and user-friendly, able to give access to all database on Internet. After a serious survey the AB system of the PC-TM-Sofia company was chosen – an experienced and well-established company in the library community in the country. Work started in respect to transferring the ISIS database for functioning in AB. The initial point of work of the library local network with the new software and all its models was in April 2005.

Since May 2005 Rositsa Zarkova has been director of the library. The period of time 2006-2009 was characterised by minor renovation, repair works, cleaning and putting library rooms and book collections in order, updating and enlarging the technical equipment, serious increase of the electronic resources on subscription and acquiring new literature – all as a result of two projects of the Ministry of culture, worth of BGN 15 000. At that time the library had a collection of 270 000 volumes of literature, annually acquiring (purchasing, donation and exchange) about 2000 volumes. Much more copies (45 of each title) were available of the textbooks and manuals received from the University publishing house, which resulted into satisfying the needs of students better. More than 450 titles of periodicals were received, of them: more than 150 are Bulgarian on subscription, 50 come from Western Europe and USA, and 40 are Russian. More than 80 titles were received on exchange, and about 130 were donated by the IMF, the World Bank, EU and other institutions.

At that time the library local network included 30 computer stations, of those 15 are used for independent work by readers. The library has subscription (with funds from the university and MEYS – the Ministry of education, youth and science) for various, both in type and scope, electronic database and resources: National bibliography – books and articles, the legal-and-information system SIELA, Encyclopaedia Britannica, the full-text EBSCO, JSTOR, the World Bank eLibrary, ProQuest Central, Science Direct and the scientific-metric databases SCOPUS and ISI Knowledge. Annually the library staff study, register and provide for access the electronic full-text versions of magazines on subscription, as well as free access to new electronic resources. Since 2007 the library has been functioning as a European documentary centre, as such it receives and provides for information and usage all official issues of the European Union.


The period of time 2011-2015 will remain in the history of the University Library with the full reconstruction of the facility, its renovation and modernization done as part of the “Integrated project for improving the conditions for providing
educational services”, implemented by the Operational programme “Regional development”. In September 2011 the formal opening of the renovated library took place and until the end of the same year the activities for introducing the new RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) automatized system and servicing technology ended.

Modernization lies, actually, in the renovated architectural appearance of the library, new furniture, floors, lights, air-conditioning and ventilation, restructuring of the book collection in the reading-room, processing with RFID labels and entering all books and periodicals from the reading-room and the book-loan service in the catalogue, opening free access of the library items for borrowing for home reading, equipping automatized places for self-service of users, issuing a new contact-free reader’s card, considerable increase of computer-equipped desks for independent work, providing copiers for self-service, working places for visually handicapped users, program and technical provision of the processes for digitalization of the library items by purchasing a robotised scanner. As an assessment of the huge work done and the results of implementing the project, in 2012 the library was awarded the title “Library of the year - 2001” by the Bulgarian bibliographic and information association (BBIA).

Apart from the numerous tasks concerning reconstruction and modernization, the university library also accomplishes successfully the activities in relation to its basic functions: acquiring, processing and entering in catalogues new relevant literature; providing utterly satisfactory and good servicing to all readers; care for arranging, maintaining and updating the library items; thorough librarian-and-bibliographic consultation and training; digitalization of parts of the library collection; increasing the qualification and competence of the library staff.

The library acquires books in three ways – purchasing, exchange (book exchange) and donation. The main part of the books is donated since these are textbooks and monographies received by the library from the university publishing house. The tendency of increasing the overall quantity of the newly acquired literature in the library collection has been affirmed.

The dynamics of the newly acquired literature in the library, according to the way of doing it, looks as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>Purchased</th>
<th>Donation</th>
<th>Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2282</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2967</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>2355</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2980</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2380</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Since 2011 with available information and necessity, they have been adding content, full text (of books accessible on Internet), web address (to the full text of the
Since the start of 2014 when entering new titles in the electronic catalogue, UE authors’ quotations started to appear in the information flow that comes into the library. With it the library meets the relevant requirements to lecturers when awarding them with scholarly degrees and titles, as well as the need of scientific-and-metric analysis of the research work.

The periodicals that have reached the library annually in the last couple of years are about 350 and are acquired in three ways – on subscription, book exchange and donation. The list of titles remains relatively constant throughout the years. By book exchange „An UE News Journal“ and „An UE annual“ are sent to more than 40 Bulgarian and 50 foreign universities, libraries, academies and others, which send their issues in turn. Every year the library is donated more than 90 titles, most of them part of the European documentary centre. In this respect the library receives a large spectre of periodicals dedicated to various relevant topics and issues of EU.

In servicing readers a long-standing tradition of more library visits comes to the fore. After opening the renovated library, besides the visits one observes also much bigger increase of the number of books borrowed by a single reader.

The new automatized system, as one of controlling access to the reading room, allows statistics and analysis of data and tendencies through: video monitoring of registered readers, attendance, borrowing books and many other indicators in the library activity.

A good illustration of readers visiting the book-loan room and the reading-room is: by average 2000 new readers are registered annually, about 25 000 library items are distributed (more than 100 daily), in the book-loan section 10000 visits are registered every year (50 daily), and in the reading-room – almost 30 000 visits annually (150 daily). At the self-service copier machines 95 000 pages are photocopied every year.

The statistics on reading-room attendance show that the reading-room is mostly visited by students majoring in “Marketing”, “Finance” and “Accountancy and control”. Another interesting fact is the positive change in user behavior which probably results from the completely improved working environment and new services. The modernization and restructuring of the library collection led also into a change of the way of servicing, by increasing the share of the reference-and-bibliographic and consultation activities and those of helping and orienting library readers.

Informing users about bibliography is one of the main tasks of the library specialists in providing service. In the modern renovated library training users, forming enough information culture and competence in them acquire particular significance so
that they can make a thorough use of all library resources and services on offer. To make popular library and information knowledge, every year there are held about 40 group lectures with students, as well as lots of individual library-informative consultations and trainings.

Training library users underwent an important development and quality change concerning their work with the library resources, after the introduction of monthly trainings “Electronic library resources” in the fall of 2014. At these sessions, meant for lecturers and PhD students, for 2 academic hours users were presented in detail various types of resources to which university users have paid access. The form of training resulted into lecturers’ interest; they participated actively and gave positive feedback.

The university library provides rich and updated information on the structure, organization of work, book collection, information resources, access to paid databases and others in its section on the university webpage. The library electronic catalogue includes the databases Books, Articles, Periodicals, Personalia (Bibliographies) in which more than 72,000 entries were made until March 2015.

Subscription for and using the databases EBSCO Business Source Complete, Encyclopaedia Britannica, the business collection JSTOR (Journal Storage – The Scholarly Archive), Passport GMID (Global Market Information Database) of Euromonitor International and the Management collection of Emerald are still on. In the above mentioned period of time accessible for use were also some of the richest world information resources provided by MES (Ministry of education and science), with national license for all higher schools. The databases meant for the higher schools of humanities are: ISI Web of Knowledge, Science Direct and Scopus. In different periods of time for university users free trial access was provided for full-text databases such as Taylor & Francis online, Press Reader, CRCnetBASE, SAGE Humanities and Social Science Package, CABI and many others.

Specialists from the library Information-and-bibliography department took part as instructors in the training for lecturers and PhD students as part of the project “Information and computer technologies in the educational process and work in e-environment”. Lectures and seminars in “Specialized training for working with library and bibliographic databases” were held.

Every year a “Guide for using the library” and “List of annual publications of the university lecturers” are published.

By tradition and on the occasion of the 95-th anniversary of the establishment of UE-Varna “Almanac: biographic and academic data about the UE lecturers: 2005 – 2015” was published. A large part of the library specialists took part in preparing it. Filling in biographic and bibliographic data, making checks and references, correction and designing the book took more than a year.
Keeping the level of professional competence of library specialists is done through involving them in national and internal qualification events, conferences and seminars. In the fall of 2001 the IBS (information-bibliographic section) assistants had a specialized training for working with the new robotized scanner – scanning, processing scanned copies and preparation for making a digitalized archive. In 2012 the library experts attended professional training courses in the university delivered by lecturers from the Department of “Library and information studies” in SU “KI. Ochridsky”. The whole staff of the library participated successfully in the training “IT skills – compulsory minimum”, organized especially for increasing the qualification of the administrative officers in UE.

The work in digitalizing library items is complied with Bulgarian legislation, regulated by a working standard, started successfully in 2012. As a result of this activity and the participation of trainees in the project “Student practice” in 2012-2014, 368 books were digitalized and entered for access through the electronic catalogue.

The European documentation centre (EDC) of the library receives for free all issues of EC – magazines, brochures, reports, statistics and papers. Part of them are processed for the library collections and entered in the databases of the library electronic catalogue; while the advertising and information materials are arranged in a specialized section at the entrance of the reading-room. In respect to holding the elections for European parliament in 2014 a Facebook account of the centre was made and maintained with relevant information.

In order to make popular the results of the project for modernizing the library and introducing the new technology of work, keeping the book collection and servicing readers, our library was presented at a number of professional events, being the host and co-organizer of two of them. In September 2012 the XIXth traditional autumn seminar of the libraries working with AB software was held. On 18 and 19 October 2012 the library hosted and co-organized a scientific international seminar on “Information literacy – models for training and good practices”.

In 2014 specialists from the library and the division of “Project management” prepared a project proposal “Digitalization and preserving the documentary history of UE-Varna as part of the cultural-historical heritage of the academic community in Bulgaria”. In March 2015 in the ranking on Program BG 08 “Cultural heritage and contemporary art” the project received high assessment and was approved for financing. It is worth BGN 610 000 – 100% full financing as part of the Financial mechanism of the European economic space 2009-2014. The project plans locating a digitalization centre in a separate space in the library reading-room and equipping it with extra technology – scanners and computers, digitalization of the Archive collection of the library – 3000 book units, as well as documents and pictures in relation to the his-
tory of the university, purchasing and introducing functional and sophisticated software for enabling the digitalization and use of the digital documents by library users. The successful implementation of the project will provide a considerable digital archive, conditions for maintaining and enriching it with new documents, modern software for usage by consumers and will improve the information servicing of students.

**Conclusion**

With its modern architectural ambiance, technical equipment, modern service technology, available information, documentary and electronic resources the library of UE-Varna deserves its dignified place among the best modern university libraries. Its 95-year history is full of the labor, professionalism and creative efforts of more than 100 specialists – librarians who worked in it in the course of time. What we have achieved gives serious grounds for taking pride in the established and preserved traditions, gained experience and professionalism, excellent results and well-deserved leading place.

**References**