

IFLA/FAIFE World Report: Libraries and Intellectual Freedom



Slovenia

23-07-1999

Legal basis

According to the relevant Act on Librarianship, library activities are intended to serve the public, that is, to all the citizens on equal basis (Article no. 6). According to Article no. 15 of the above mentioned Act, libraries are obliged to enable free access to library materials.

Several articles of the [Code of Ethics of Slovenian Librarians](#) deal with the protection of intellectual freedom from two points of view, i.e. access to information and protection of library users:

Article 7

A librarian should protect user's privacy as regards personal data, searched items and information.

Article 8

A librarian should strive for free transfer of documents and information but he/she is not responsible for any consequences resulting from their use.

Article 9

A librarian should oppose all kinds of censorship and other professionally unfounded restrictions of access and transfer of documents and information.

Access to information

There was no ban on written word in Slovenia lately. The court did withhold the distribution of a book on freemasonry (Dvoršak Andrej: V znamenju loze) because of ongoing court proceedings; however, libraries put no restrictions on loan.

Another example that could have led to ideologically founded reshaping of library collections was a recent proposition of a parliamentarian from the Christian Democratic Party that town authorities should order a survey of library collections as to their ideological equilibrium and political spectre (Slovanski knjiznici ostaja staro ime. Delo, 8.6. 1999, str. 7).

Most frequently, limitation of free access to information is the result of financial restraints which prevent equal opportunities for all library users, and of deficient knowledge of librarians as regards their professional role.

Belonging to this group are: charging for services which should be free of charge; payment of enrolment fee as a condition for membership in a library, including borrowing of books home, payment of extra services: interlibrary loan, reservation of books, relatively high fines for overdue library materials.

The fulfilment of needs of ethnic minorities represents a specific problem (autochthon groups and immigrants). While Italian and Hungarian minorities have their status defined by the Slovenian constitution which is on the other hand reflected also in services provided to them by libraries, Article 31 of the Act on Librarianship), other ethnic minorities are not catered for so well. Each immigrant can become a library member and can borrow books through interlibrary loan and can use the library in accordance to its rules and regulations; but operation of libraries is carried out in Slovenian language. The Ministry of Culture and National Parent Library Service, operating in the frames of the National and University Library, have recently started two projects: the shaping of criteria of positive discrimination on ethnically mixed territories, the result of which will be normative regulating satisfaction of the needs of minorities on ethnically mixed territories, and the founding of libraries in Roma settlements – Life without Prejudice.

The problem of inaccessibility of library materials is acute also for users with special needs. Especially the blind and visually handicapped have not been able to use the services of public libraries so far. These problems will be partially solved in the frames of the project of equipment of academic libraries and programs of the training of librarians for work with handicapped library users.

Population:	1,924,000 (1996)
GNP per capita:	\$ 9,240 (1996)
Government / Constitution:	Republic
Main languages:	Slovene
Main religions:	Roman Catholic
Literacy:	99% (1995)
Online:	23% (July 1999)