

Summary



Erasmus+ : More Than Promoting Mobility / The Programme Options for Libraries and Library Projects (Hannah Neumann)

(pp. 480 – 483)

There has hardly another programme funded by the European Union (EU) which is as well-known as Erasmus+. While its official definition as »the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe« clearly shows how extensive it is, in the public eye it is mainly regarded as a way to promote student mobility. In the film »L'Auberge Espagnole« Erasmus+ reached an audience outside of universities; one sometimes speaks of »Generation Erasmus+«; and national newspapers and magazines even make reference to »Erasmus babys« , i.e. the offspring born in partner relationships between two people who met during their Erasmus+ year abroad. Only somewhat less well-known is the fact that Erasmus+ also offers travel options for university staff members, company trainees, and occupational trade teachers. And for staff members at universities the programme for »staff weeks« has become a familiar option, especially since it has been offered with increasing frequency at university libraries. A further area covered by Erasmus+, which could be of interest to libraries, is still relatively unknown: project funding and staff exchanges between European libraries at the institutional level. In this article Hannah Neumann presents the various opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and gives particular attention to project funding.

A Cathedral of Knowledge and Communication / In Utrecht a New Central Library Is Being Established in the Historical Main Post Office (Jan-Pieter Barbian)

(pp. 494 – 497)

Libraries must often exercise a lot of patience when implementing a major new building project. And at times plans have ended in failure. Then again this may lead to a fortunate turn of events, due to an unexpected and positive opportunity, as in the case of Utrecht. Since the end of the 1990s there had been discussion about building a new central library. The plan was to build in proximity to the area being transformed around the central train station at the edge of the inner city. However, in the aftermath of the 2007 international finance crisis, the city council had to first postpone and then cancel the planning after the costs for the new municipal concert hall had tripled. Local authorities were concerned that another new building could lead to further financial disaster. A solution to this deadlock was then found surprisingly quickly and in the pragmatic style that the Dutch are known for: the new central library should take up occupancy of the former main post office in the heart of the city.

Anyone strolling through the four floors – from the basement to the uppermost level with its lead-glass dome roof that calls to mind a Parisian department store – will remark upon the inclusive pattern of usage. It is visited by widely different age groups, from infants to senior citizens and people of all ethnic backgrounds. Alongside the media collection there are also numerous and heavily used Internet stations and workspaces of various shapes and forms, and a MakerSpace called »Laboratorium«, used for investigating new technologies and unleashing one's own creativity. An extensive programme of events invites visitors to participate in the exchange of information and opinions.

Reacting to Changing Parameters / Public Libraries in Greece (Valentini Moniarou-Papacostantinou, Evgenia Vassilakaki)

(pp. 498 – 503)

Changing developments in social, political, economic and technical spheres of life have overtaken Greece, as they have in every other country of the world. As a motor for change, libraries have risen to the challenge. But in the past ten years Greece has felt the effects of a serious economic crisis that has changed daily life in Greek society for ever. Particularly in public, municipal and academic libraries the subsequent changes have had a noticeable effect.

In Greece public libraries are funded by government authorities and are thus subject to reforms at the local level. In recent years a reform in local administrative structure has led to many cities and towns being merged administratively, resulting in the closure of a number of public libraries as well as in cuts in budgets and staff size, and the redistribution of staff. Budget cuts are for Greece's public libraries nothing new. In the course of the economic crisis this led to reductions in collection development, in the technical equipping of libraries and in the quality of information services for users. Budget cuts are today more serious than ever, since libraries in some cases have no money for new acquisitions, thus becoming dependent upon donations.

Public libraries in Greece are nonetheless making every effort to meet the changing needs of its citizenry by participating in projects which involve local residents and by working together with other cultural institutions.

Translated by Martha Baker