

Public libraries as part of the creative economy

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Abstract

The fields of art, culture and science form the basis of a creative economy. One of the representative of the culture are libraries, which provide irreplaceable services in the provision of learning and cultural needs not only to individuals but also to society as a whole, so their all-round development is an important public interest. In addition, they to promote lifelong learning, information literacy, creative personal development and linguistic diversity of inhabitants. Even in the current period of the computerization and digitization of the society, libraries has an irreplaceable role, because they create the conditions for fast, cheap and efficient access to information for inhabitants not only through books but also through internet connection options. One of the founders of libraries is also towns and municipalities. Although, the provision of cultural services, including the establishment of libraries, belongs to the original competencies of local self-government, not every municipalities has a library. Nevertheless, in most Slovak towns and municipalities have a public library. Especially in the small municipalities, libraries represent is an important source of informations for the inhabitants of the municipality. In the paper, we evaluate the changes in the public libraries in the conditions of local self-government on the basis of selected indicators per 2009-2015.

Key words: Public Libraries, Creative Economy, Information Literacy, Local Self - government

JEL Classification: 018, R51, H76, C02

1 Introduction

The concept of creativity has the base in the Latin language - creatio. However, in the scientific literature we can find several definitions of the creativity. The creativity means people's ability to create any new, original ideas previously unknown to their author. Creativity had long been perceived as an elite activity of talented "chosen fates" that have dealt with art, lead, and inventions. But at the present time, authors say that every person has a bit of creativity in yourself. Creativity is not destined for only someone; every human being has a certain level of creativity that can be greatly developed (Beresecká, Petrášová, 2014). It also confirms Reid, Gatrell (2017), who mention, that we enter the abstract notion of "creativity" – innovation's non-linear socio-cultural and squishy partner and the creative class. Unlike innovation systems that could arguably be relocated or reengineered, creativity as a concept and practice is inherently embedded in place and reflects a more holistic collection of socio-spatial relationships that are more cultural and historical

– than a simple economic model. Florida (2002) say, that the Creative Class derives its identity and values from its role as purveyors of creativity. When we see ourselves as "creative," our self-image affects the choices we make in every area of our lives. Based on a massive body of research, *The Rise of the Creative Class* chronicles the ongoing sea-change in people's choices and attitudes, and shows not only what's happening but also how it stems from a fundamental economic change. The Creative Class now comprises more than 25% of all employed people.

2 Brief Literature Overview

Creative economy consider the economy, which besides traditional (exhaustible) resources targeting the source of human creativity for making of products, accepts principles of creative industries, creative class, creative places, with freedom being the indispensable condition for its development (Mišúnova, 2012). Innovations are also part of the creative economy. They confirm this also Stacho, Stachová and Hudáková (2015) who say, that companies constantly need to adapt to changing business environment, therefore innovations are becoming an everyday reality in business practice. In an effort to innovate towards ensuring, respectively maintaining a strong competitive position, companies seek incentives innovation process at various places. Customers appear to be the most suitable source in this case, companies try to adapt to them and thus satisfy their needs by implementing innovations. European Commission in the study *Economic of Culture* (2006) divide creative economy into two sectors – cultural and creative. The cultural and creative economy is a natural environment for innovative ideas and the development and valorisation of creative potential. Creativity is the key to innovative and interdisciplinary responses to global and local challenges - whether economic or social. The cultural sector includes the area of traditional art (art and theatrical art, cultural heritage) and the cultural industry (film, audiovisual, television and radio broadcasting, computer games, music, publishing). The creative sector includes also the creative industry (design, architecture and advertising) and related areas (eg. software development). Libraries are also part of the cultural sector. Some authors perceive libraries as social and community places for interaction, leisure and education (Griffis, 2010; Houghton, Foth and Miller, 2013; Johnson, 2010, Mach, Maier, 2007). It confirms also Stoletova (2016) who say, that libraries play a significant role in the organization of cultural and leisure sphere of the population's life. Despite the fact, that e - books are currently being in the forefront, libraries still provide their services in most cities and towns. The municipalities provides libraries and information services by establishing a municipal library or city library as a legal entity through the organizational unit of a legal entity established by the municipality, or through the organizational unit of the municipal office or through another library. By the legislative condition in the Slovak republic (Law No. 126/2015 Coll. about libraries) public libraries include municipal library or city library or regional library. Municipal library and city library complements, records, processes, preserves, protects and makes available to the universal library units, including local documents. Also provides library and information services for users, organizes and conducts community, cultural, social and educational activities and can perform the function of the school library in the scope and under the conditions determined by the library organizer. For example, Mittermeyer (1994) say, that the library is a municipal service, and like for any other municipal service, unsatisfied inhabitants address their complaints to municipal office.

3 Objectives and methods

Libraries provide irreplaceable services in the provision of cognitive, educational and cultural needs not only to individuals, but also society as a whole, therefore their all-round development is an important public interest.

Systematic collection, the storage, processing and disclosure of information disseminated on all types of media is an important attribute not only the current development of a modern knowledge society, but also it is a significant investment in the future development of knowledge, culture and education of the inhabitants. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the changes in the public libraries in the conditions of local self-government in the Slovak Republic on the basis of selected indicators per 2009-2015. We value public libraries from the following views:

- The number and structure of public libraries
- The structure of library units and possibilities of acquisition
- Number of users of library service

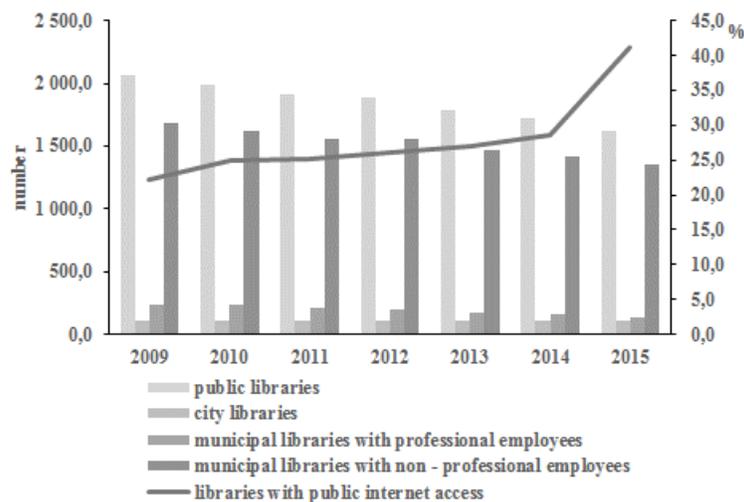
Libraries will continue to fulfill their mission in relation to the public and to provide quality services, that promote knowledge, education and culture to the widest possible range of users in an innovative form based on their traditional functions but adapted to the changing conditions of the 21st century. In order for these library and information services will be to compete with other information platforms, it is important to analyze the current status of the libraries within the society and to set their further development strategy. This contributes to increasing their quality of service, which users cannot find elsewhere.

4 Results

In addition to traditional functions of lending books and providing spaces for reading newspapers and magazines, libraries are becoming more multifunctional, providing space for different activities, including work. If we evaluate the number of public libraries in the conditions of Slovakia, we will see yearly decline during the analyzed period. In 2015, compared to 2009, the total number of public libraries declined of 436 libraries, what is present a decrease of 21.15%. (Figure 1). The yearly decline of the number of public libraries was mainly due to by decreasing the number of municipal libraries, which its number decreasing more significantly compared to the number of city libraries. In 2015 from the total number of cities in Slovakia (140), public library was located in 105 cities, which represents 75% of the territory coverage by public libraries. Another situation is in the framework of the assessment of coverage of the territory by municipal libraries. The settlement structure of Slovakia can be characterized as significantly fragmented with a large share of small municipalities. Of the 2 890 municipalities of Slovakia, has 67% municipalities less than 1 000 inhabitants and live there only 16% of the total population of the country (Sloboda, 2004). All municipalities, regardless of the number of the population, perform both original and transferred competences in the same volume. The establishment and operation of libraries include to the original competencies. This type of competencies is largely funded by own municipalities' resources. The big part of this incomes to present incomes from income tax divided from the state based on number of inhabitants. In the first place, the municipalities are trying to ensure mainly the general operation of the municipality (eg. lighting, communication maintenance, etc.) and only if they have sufficient funds, they use them for culture. For this reason, many of small municipalities do not established a municipal library. Despite this fact in 2015 from the total number of municipalities in Slovakia (2 890) was a public library in 1 483 municipalities, which represents 51.31% of the coverage of municipalities with public libraries. As part of the

evaluation of the development of the number of public libraries in municipalities, it is possible to monitor the yearly decline. Changes in the field of municipal libraries occurred in 2002, when the municipalities gained the competences of the regional education. Almost all schools have their own school libraries, so almost immediately after the assumption of this competence, many municipalities canceled the municipal libraries and merged them with school libraries. This trend subsequently resulted in a decline of the total number of municipal libraries, because school libraries are not reported in the statistics of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, but within the statistics of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. An important part of libraries is the staff who come into contact with users. The library staff may be qualified or unqualified. This distribution is again related with the size category of municipalities. In small municipalities in most cases libraries present the part of the municipal office, so it means, that either some of the staff directly care also about the library, or in the some case pensioners work in the library. Since such this situation is not sustainable in the long time especially in small municipalities, so many of these municipalities cancel the libraries. This is the most common reason for the yearly decline in the number of municipal libraries with unqualified personnel (Figure 1). Today, when information and telecommunication technologies have become an integral part of ordinary people's lives, libraries are also responding to this trend, that they trying to their readers to offer internet access as a supplement to classical services. Figure 1 shows that the number of libraries with the public internet during the analyses period yearly grew. Compared to 2009 and 2015, it is possible to follow in almost a twofold increase in the number of libraries with the public internet.

Figure 1: Development of number and structure of public libraries in the period 2009-2015

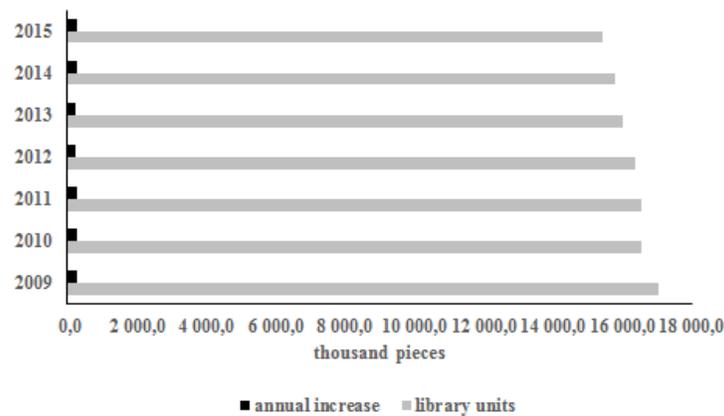


Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

Regardless of the necessary transformation of libraries activities in the field of library and information services, it is still necessary to properly perform their basic functions - preservation of the written inheritance of the country regardless of the medium of these information. This requires, on the one hand, the revitalization of the building and technical infrastructure of the depositaries and the expansion of their capacities through the construction of new, modern premises for the preservation of the written inheritance, on the other hand, the implementation of technological solutions that will allow the long-term preservation born digital materials which importance is constantly growing. Despite of this, it is possible to monitor the yearly decline in the total number

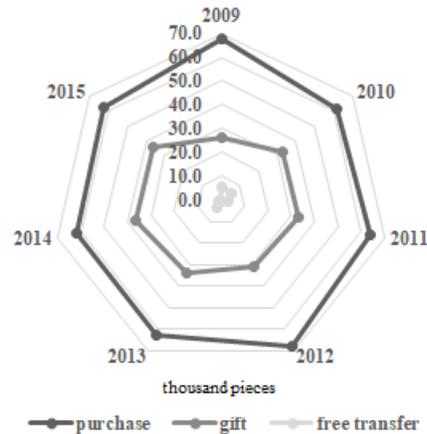
of library units in the analyzed years. In 2015, compared to 2009, the total number of book units decreased by 1 594 thousand pieces (Figure 2). According to International Librarian Organization (IFLA), the basic library fund should contain 2-3 library units per capita. In the case of Slovakia with a 5 426 252 inhabitants (December 31, 2015), the basic library fund should be at the level of 10 852 thousand pieces or 16 278 thousand pieces. In 2015, the library fund was 15 450 thousand pieces of library units, although could be observed their decreasing compared with the previous year. A negative trend can also be seen in the restoration of library units. According to the IFLA, the annual increasing of the library units should be 0.20 pcs per capita. In 2015, on the basis of the number of inhabitants, the annual increase should amount to 1 085 thousand pieces of library units, but Figure 2 shows, that in 2015 the annual increase was only 274 thousand pieces of library units.

Figure 2: Development of library units and annual increase of public libraries in the period 2009-2015



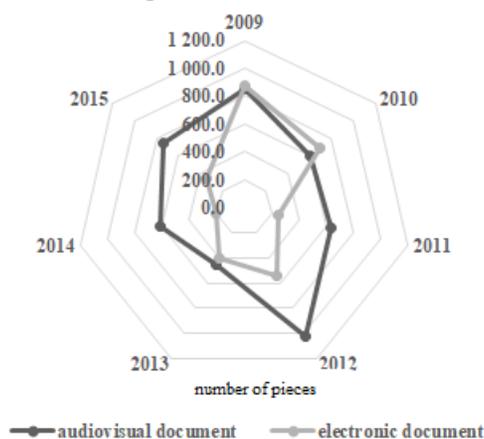
Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

Recovery of the library units should be systematic. It confirms also Huvila (2013), who present systematic reproduction and needs to develop information services in libraries from a holistic perspective that takes into account the practical implications of the shared norms and assumptions of how a library should work. In Slovak Republic public libraries acquire its library units by different ways, but most often way is purchasing, gift, or free transfer (Figure 3). During the analyzed period, libraries gained the largest volume of the library units by purchasing, but year-on-year we can observed some fluctuations. In 2010, compared with the previous year, it is possible to record a decline of purchasing, but already in the following year the situation has changed and the public libraries purchased the library units about 5.78% more than with the previous year. In the next two years, it is possible to monitor the year-on-year slight decline of purchasing of library units, but since 2014, this type of acquisition of the library units has been on the rise. This fluctuating development is related to the way of the financing of the libraries. The most of the incomes is primarily present incomes from the fees, which pay by members of the library. If their number decreasing, also decreasing the amount of funds that libraries spend on the library's unit renewal. Another way of recovering of the library units are to acquisition library units from by gift. Many authors, as well as sponsors, are contributing to the expansion of the library fund for this way. The analysis shows that, with the exception of 2012, this type of acquisition has recorded a year-on-year increase of the library's unit renewal. In the case of cancellation of individual branch offices of libraries or whole libraries, libraries can obtain new library units by a free transfer. However, this type represents only a minimal share of the acquisition of new library units compared to the previous two types.

Figure 3: Selected possibilities of acquisition of library units of public libraries in the period 2009-2015

Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

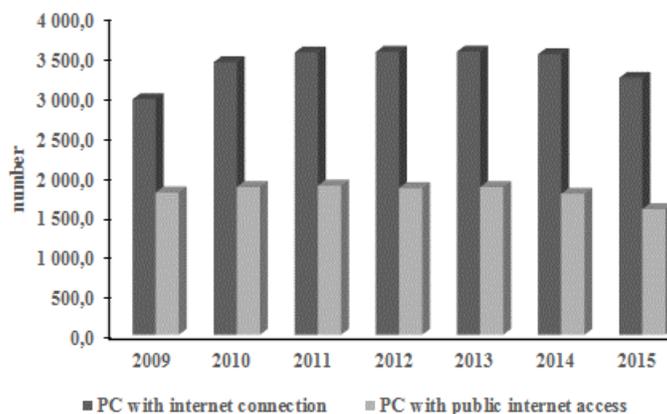
Each library's unit is registered, professionally processed, fully protected and adequately accessible for public. The global trend is the creation of digital libraries, which should provide direct access to digital and also non-digital information resources and interconnect the education and culture by the information's technologies. The digitalization of the documents of the cultural heritage will allow the preservation of original informations media, while allowing an effective accessibility of this content for the public on a much wider scale. This is confirmed by Figure 4, which shows the volume of electronic and audiovisual documents that public libraries procure every year. The most of these type documents public libraries received in 2012 (1 018 audiovisual and 546 electronic documents). However, the acquisition of these documents is closely related to the development of the market with audiovisual and electronic documents, where such documents can be obtained. If we compare Slovak Republic with other countries, it can be said, that this market is still not well developed in the Slovak Republic.

Figure 4: Annual increment of audiovisual and electronic document of library units of public libraries in the period 2009-2015

Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

The basic principle of the public library is that its services must be available to all. One option is to use information's and communication's technologies that allow readers to access for the library's units and for other information sources which are publicly available on the internet, not only within the library but also through remote access. Besides, that libraries also have the opportunity to use inter-library services. In this way, the provision of information's resources gives to the user the freedom by the choice of informations in the context of its needs. The libraries should become an "electronic gateway" for information in the digital age. All inhabitants should have access to the informations that will help them manage their lives in local conditions, acquire basic knowledge about society and positively participate for the development of global society. They also confirm Anderson, Whalley (2015), who say, that libraries enable for users to engage in a wide array of online activities, the range of which reflects both the push of government policies and the pull of innovative services. The library should provide access to its own sources and sources of other libraries and information services by creating and maintaining efficient electronic networks at all levels, from local to international. For example in Denmark, has been set up a virtual public library, which currently allows access to catalogs of all public libraries as well as larger scientific and special libraries. People can order a rental any book from anywhere libraries in Denmark and pick it up in your local library (Stasselová, 2011). It also confirm Muralikumar et al., (2017), who say that E-learning repositories and digital libraries are fast becoming important sources for gathering information and learning material. The use of electronic library services is increasing and contributes to the company's computerization and internalization, which to leading to partial replace of classical library services, because online catalogs are also used by unregistered users, and documents are ordered without physical visit of the library (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Development of number of PC with public internet acces of public libraries in the period 2009-2015



Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

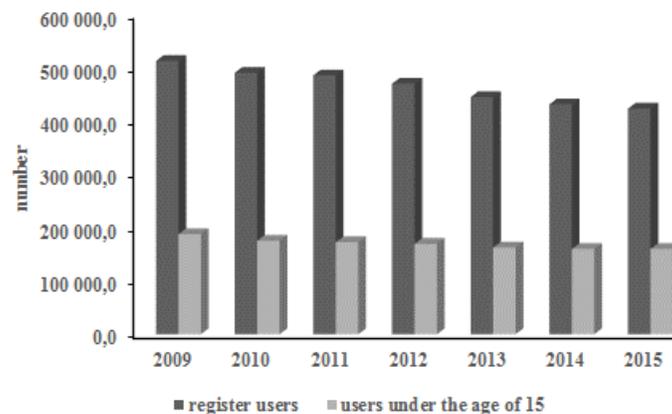
An important communication channel for libraries is also a custom website, where readers can find informations about the library itself, as well as links to other useful websites. This trend is confirmed by an increasing the number of libraries with own website. While in 2009 only 3% of all public libraries had own website, already in 2015 it was more than 10%, what it represents nearly threefold increase of the number of libraries with own website (Table 1).

Table 1: Development of number of website of public libraries and visitors of website of public libraries in the period 2009-2015

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Index 2015/2009
number of public libraries	2 061,0	1 989,0	1 916,0	1 891,0	1 789,0	1 726,0	1 625,0	0,78
number of own website	62	116	188	105	93	105	174	2,8
% share of libraries with a own website	3,0	5,83	9,81	5,55	5,20	6,08	10,7	3,57
number of visitors of website	1 403 145	930 345	1 053 792	1 283 125	2 675 370	2 599 788	3 044 822	2,17

Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

At present time, public libraries are not only providing lending services for their users, but are also trying to open up to the wider public by providing a variety of services also to unregistered users (eg. educational activities, cultural and social events). Nevertheless, it is still possible to follow a slight decrease in the number of registered active users between 2009 and 2015. In 2015, compared to 2009, the total number of registered active users decreased by 89 540, that it represent decreasing about 17.46%. The number of registered active users represents 7.8% share of the population of the Slovak Republic at 31 December 2015. A similar trend is also found for users under the age of 15 (Figure 6).

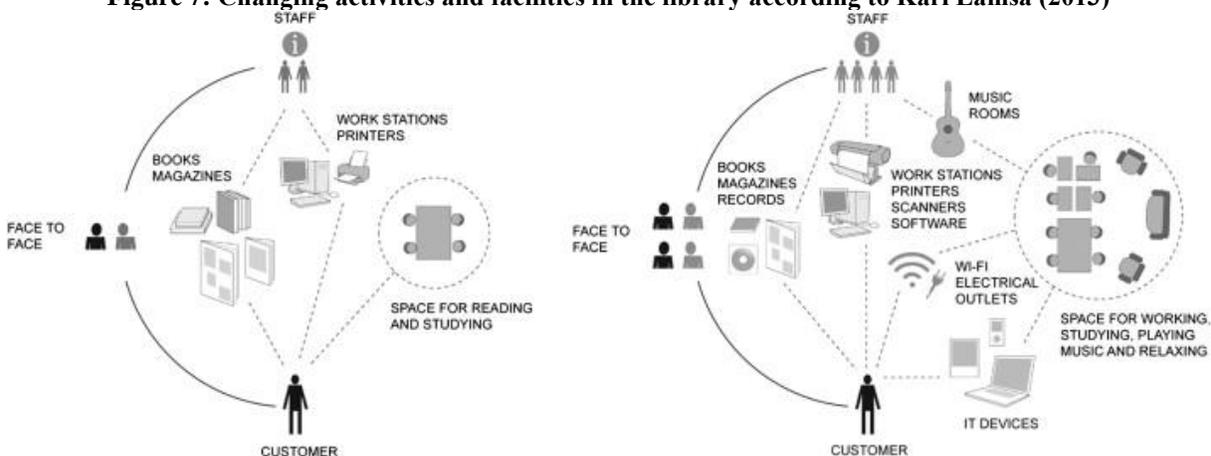
Figure 6: Development of number of users of library services of public libraries in Slovakia in the period 2009-2015

Source: Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic, own processing

To improve this situation as well as to support reader literacy, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of Slovak Republic declared year 2016 for the “Year of Reader Literacy” as the part of the National Strategy for level upgrading and continuous development of reading literacy. The goal of developing reader literacy is such a reader who has reader competencies that allow him to work with different types of texts used for different purposes. Such this reading with understanding can be developed only by continuously engaging students for the active reading. The goal of developing reader literacy is such a reader who has reader competencies that allow him to work with different types of texts used for different purposes. Such this reading with understanding can be developed only by continuously engaging people for the active reading. The development of reading literacy can be considered the most important part of modern education.

Many authors will confirm it, for example Skelly et al. (2015), who say, that there is indeed a strong relationship between all aspects of public library use and education, or Bogel (2012) who studied reading programmes for children, or interactions between users and the librarian (Kouame et al., 2005) whether, availability of online resources (Bertot et al., 2008). Another option to make library services more attractive for users, present Forlano (2008), who say, that furthermore, libraries along with coffee shops, parks, and other public spaces, present as transitory workspaces. Transitory workspaces he defines as those places, that do not have any room designed for work, but which workers choose temporarily for working purposes. It is quite possible that this will happen, because work practices are changing and workers becoming more flexible. It also confirms Di Marino et al., (2015), who say, that the library's place seems to acquire the role of creative incubator and working space. From this combination Kari Lämsä (2013) present a concept of “spatial incubators” (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Changing activities and facilities in the library according to Kari Lämsä (2013)



Source: DI MARINO, M., LAPINTIE, K. 2015. Libraries as transitory workspaces and spatial incubators.

5 Conclusion

The cultural and creative economy is a natural environment for innovative ideas and the development and enhancement of creative potential. Creativity is the key to innovative and interdisciplinary responses to global and local challenges - whether economic or social. Analyses show, that the position of public libraries have negative trends in the number and structure of libraries and also in number of active users over the past seven years. But it can us positively to assess the fact that libraries are still trying to increase their competitiveness by increasing the use of information and communication technology. This philosophy is also supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, which, within the framework of the creation of policies and strategies in the field of creative industry on a self-governing level, envisages the creation of centralized distribution systems (eg. book mergers), which would allow large end-users in the given sector (eg. libraries), to obtain books titles cheaper and more efficient. At the same time, it would have a significant positive impact on the sector as such (the central information system of the titles of books would allow better alignment of supply and demand by individual titles), because currently no effective way to identify prepared and published books titles in the Slovak Republic. Support for cultural services, including public libraries, will play a key role in increasing the competitiveness of the modern information society.

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