

Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe

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Norwegian inspiration for Czech librarianship

Scandinavian libraries have been an inspiration for Czech libraries for many years. Nordic library know-how enters the Czech Republic through excursions, professional texts, lectures and the influence is significant: makerspaces and labs are created in Czech libraries, technologies are used, and human-centered design and participation methods are used when thinking about and creating services.

Thanks to the support of EEA and Norway Funds, it is possible to deepen the cooperation between Czech and Norwegian librarianship even further. The Czech Republic Libraries Association (Sdružení knihoven, SDRUK) and The Norwegian Library Association (Norsk Bibliotekforening, NLA) will start cooperating within the project The Czech Republic Libraries Association – Strategic Partner of Libraries in the Czech Republic, funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

“The two-year close cooperation, enabled by the support of Norwegian funds, aims to transfer the experience and practices of the Norwegian Library Association and its members to our conditions, and strengthen the position of libraries in society by strengthening the Czech Republic Libraries Association,” explains Tomáš Řehák, Chairman of the Czech Republic Libraries Association and Director of the Municipal Library in Prague.

“When we were contacted by the Czech Republic Libraries Association and asked to participate in this project, we were happy to accept. We are looking forward to contribute and to learn about the Czech Libraries Association and the Czech Library field,” says Vidar Lund, president of NLA.

As part of the project, the Czech Republic Libraries Association should expand its membership base, services provided to member and non-member libraries, as well as its know-how in the field of effective representation of Czech librarianship interests with political representation, state administration and other partners.

Last year, the Government-adopted [Library Development Strategy 2021-2027](#) introduces libraries as pillars of civil society and natural community centers, education and training supporting institutions and curators of cultural and knowledge wealth. In order for the goals of the Strategy to be met, the Czech librarianship needs a strong organization that will represent libraries across departments.

The Czech Republic Libraries Association represents the largest libraries in the Czech Republic. Its members are all regional libraries, which are methodically responsible for the development of libraries in the region, but the members also include municipal, specialized and university libraries. The Czech Republic Libraries Association is the organizer of the most important professional event in Czech librarianship - the Libraries of today conference.

Norwegian Library Association (NLA) is a non-profit, independent organization aiming to promote and develop library and information services. NLA's objective is to be a forceful and unifying interest group for the Norwegian library and information services sector and for all library users.

NLA represents the needs of libraries in parliamentary committees and discussions on budgets for the operation and development of libraries, organizes policy debates with representatives of public administration, cultural organizations and civil society on current challenges and measures, helps political parties integrate library development into their programs, comments on changes in laws and provides information and support to individual libraries, for example if they find themselves in a situation where there is a risk of reducing the library budget.

Czech libraries keep pace with world trends and provide a wide range of services. The declining number of borrowings makes it possible to expand library services in areas other than just lending books. The offer of non-formal lifelong learning is expanding, libraries become a place where people can meet, get acquainted with new topics. An example is this year's focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which resonate in libraries in the Czech Republic and Norway.

Eliška Bartošová
coordinator of The Czech Republic Libraries Association – Strategic Partner of Libraries in the Czech Republic project
eliska.bartosova@sdruk.cz

Ann Berit Hulthin
Secretary General
Norwegian Library Association
abh@norskbibliotekforening.no

Links:

The Czech Republic Libraries Association – Strategic Partner of Libraries in the Czech Republic:
<https://sdruk.cz/projekty/strategicky-partner-knihoven-v-cr/>
The Czech Republic Libraries Association (Sdružení knihoven ČR): <https://sdruk.cz/>
Norsk Bibliotekforening: <https://norskbibliotekforening.no/>