

**The library development concept in the
Czech Republic between the years 2021-
2027
with prospect to 2030**

Libraries – pillars of civil society, education, and culture

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Background information on the strategy

The Libraries Development Concept in the Czech Republic for 2021-2027 is a follow-up document to the Libraries Development Concept in the Czech Republic for 2017-2020, which was adopted by the Government with Resolution No. 1032 of November 23rd, 2016.

Its task is to integrate the library system into the Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic 2030. It is a document of a general nature, covering a diverse system of libraries operated by municipalities, regions, state institutions and private entities. The Framework articulates a basic vision for the library system's development under three basic pillars: libraries as pillars of civil society and natural centres of communities, libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions, and libraries as guardians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth.

❖ I. Libraries as pillars of civil society and natural centres of communities

Under Pillar I, activities aimed at developing the potential of libraries as community centres, including adequate space, technological and material facilities, and staffing, will be supported.

❖ II. Libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions

Under Pillar II, activities to strengthen the educational function of libraries and cooperation between libraries and schools will be supported.

❖ III. Libraries as custodians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth

Under Pillar III, activities that enable cultural and scientific wealth to be made available in analogue and digital form to all users will be supported.

The analytical part includes a PEST analysis, a sectoral (internal) analysis and a SWOT analysis, which discuss the library sector in terms of the impact of the external environment and internal factors, as well as opportunities and risks. The strategic part includes a vision for development until 2027, structured around the three above-mentioned pillars, to which the propositions and strategic goals are included. The implementation part presents the implementation measures – activities and partial projects necessary to meet the objectives.

Although the libraries have different specialisations, priorities, and target groups, they operate on identical principles, based on Act No. 257/2001 Coll., on libraries and the conditions for the operation of public library and information services, as amended (the Library Act), and are able to cooperate effectively and seek synergistic solutions to contemporary social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges.

Libraries – pillars of civil society, education, and culture

The Czech Republic in 2030¹ - vision and context for the strategic direction of libraries

The Czech Republic is a cohesive society of educated, responsible and active citizens. The society is cohesive thanks to functional families and participating communities, decent work, accessible quality health and social care, equal access to culture and an effective education system that enables everyone to reach their individual educational maximum and promotes the development of transferable competences. People living in this society prefer a healthy lifestyle, live in a healthy environment, and favour conscious consumption. The material and non-material needs of individuals are met while minimising environmental impacts and social exclusion.

The Czech Republic economy is purposefully reducing its material and energy intensity. Economic institutions provide for long-term economic growth based on entrepreneurship, innovation, human creativity, higher value-added industries, circular economy, low-carbon technologies, robotisation and digitalisation, and supported by a resilient and high-quality infrastructure. It is based on social market economy principles, with cooperation and coordination between the public, entrepreneurial and non-profit sectors as a key feature. Public finance ensures that resources to implement public policies are sufficient and efficiently spent.

Agriculture, forestry, and water management take account of natural limits and global climate change – improving soils, slowing water runoff from the landscape, and helping to maintain biodiversity. The development of settlements and technical, especially transport infrastructure is also carried out with the utmost regard to maintaining and enhancing the ecosystem services provided by the landscape.

Responsible land use creates conditions for the balanced and harmonious development of municipalities and regions, increases territorial cohesion, channels the suburbanisation trend, and reduces forced mobility. Cities and municipalities create the conditions for maintaining and improving the quality of life of their population. In all respects, competent public administrations communicate openly with citizens and involve them systematically in decision-making and planning. Settlements are adapted to climate change.

The Czech Republic, as a confident and cooperative member of the international community, contributes through its domestic and foreign policy to promoting the values and principles of sustainable development in the EU and worldwide.

The Czech Republic is governed democratically and, at the same time, effectively in the long term. The decision-making structure is resilient, flexible, and inclusive. Citizens participate in public decision-making and the state creates the right conditions for them to do so. The public administration, through public policies, improves the quality of life of the Czech Republic's population in the long term and meets the sustainable development objectives.

¹ [Strategický rámec Česká republika 2030](#), p. 27, 51, 67, 75, 91 a 99.

Libraries and their contribution to sustainable development in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has an exceptionally dense library network in international comparison², The Czech Republic has an exceptionally dense library network in international comparison, comprising more than 6,000 libraries and branches, which provide public library and information services within the meaning of Act No. 257/2001 Coll., on libraries and the conditions for the provision of public library and information services (Library Act), as amended. This is a legacy of *the Municipal Public Libraries*³ of 1919, which ordered every political municipality to establish a public library. This system still presents an extraordinary opportunity for the development of the country.

The library system is diverse – municipalities, regions, state institutions and private entities are their founders (operators). Libraries have different specialisations, priorities, and different target groups. Nevertheless, they are able to cooperate effectively and seek synergistic solutions to contemporary social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges.

Data as of 31.12.2018

	Number of libraries	Number of branches	Library stock in thousands	Readers in thousands	Loans in thousands	Information resources expenditure in thousands of CZK	Employees - contracts
National Czech Republic Library	1		7,358	22	470	24,132	463
Moravian Library	1		4,237	20	624	10,260	181
Regional libraries	13		14,951	314	11,285	64,217	1,307
Libraries operated by municipalities	5,302	891	37,814	1,017	40,326	244,142	3,338
Health libraries	115		2,465	59	697	73,537	268
University libraries	69		12,062	410	1,457	361,338	813
Czech Republic Academy of Sciences Libraries	60		3,848	17	73	x	229
Museum and gallery libraries	236		8,988	27	247	9,720	316
Other specialised libraries	93	4	6,441	90	518	489,349	449
TOTAL	5,891	895	98,174	1,976	55,697	787,835	7,364

Source: National Information and Advisory Centre for Culture, National Medical Library, Association of University Libraries, the Czech Republic Academy of Sciences Library, v.v.i.

² QUICK, Susannah a kol., [Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries](#), p. 12.

³ [Zákon č. 430/1919 Sb., o veřejných knihovnách obecních a navazující předpisy](#)

Libraries are a democratic platform for public dialogue and citizen participation; they are an integral part of the social infrastructure that strengthens community cohesion. They significantly support scientific work, innovation, formal and informal education and play a fundamental and irreplaceable role in the process of lifelong learning. They are key cultural institutions in towns, cities or regions, where they not only ensure equal access to the cultural heritage of the nation and of civilisation, but also inspire and support the development of contemporary culture and the arts. In all of these roles, libraries are already making a significant contribution to the Czech Republic's sustainable development and doing so with exceptional economic efficiency. Worldwide and Czech research shows that public funds spent on library activities have a return on investment of hundreds of percent.⁴

A. Analytical part

PEST analysis

Political and legislative factors

The role of libraries is closely linked to freedom and democracy. Libraries are a state cultural policy instrument and are therefore dependent on the state's political culture. The state is preparing a number of measures to ensure, on the one hand, the growing importance of the regions and, on the other hand, the involvement of these regions in society-wide processes. Libraries have not long been perceived as important institutions by the public administration and therefore, their bargaining position is not high⁵. This is reflected in all aspects of library activity, both in the economic security of the activity and in employee salaries. Public libraries are mostly not anchored in the strategic development materials of individual ministries (except the Ministry of Culture), regions or municipalities, which means that the potential of libraries as information institutions in the field of public participation in democratic processes is not used. The neutral environment of the library is an ideal space for the development of the participation principles in the development of civil society. This potential is not fully exploited by library operators.

Unlike in many other countries, Czech libraries can rely on a special law⁶ which defines a library as a facility in which public library and information services as defined by the law are provided in a manner guaranteeing equal access to all without discrimination. However, it does not provide for an educational role for libraries, particularly in the area of promoting different types of literacy (reading, digital, media). This is a consequence of the Competence Act, which primarily entrusted the education sector to the Ministry of Education (MoEYS), while libraries are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture (MoC). As a result of this division, economically important programmes for promoting education do not usually take libraries into account and sometimes there are even doubts as to whether libraries can be considered educational institutions at all.

The cooperation between schools, educational institutions and libraries is not yet framed jointly in the strategies of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. Libraries are mostly not mentioned in the conceptual materials of the MoEYS, they are not perceived as relevant educational institutions, and only rarely are they mentioned in key curriculum documents – the Framework Educational Programmes. The role of libraries as an actor of non-formal education and lifelong learning is very marginally indicated in the *Guidelines for Education Policy 2030+*. However, there is no doubt that libraries, like schools, not only develop literacy and competences of pupils for life in the 21st century, but also contribute significantly to reducing social exclusion and inequalities in access to quality education at the local level⁷.

⁴ MĚSTSKÁ KNIHOVNA V PRAZE, [ROI: Měření efektivity vynaložených prostředků ve veřejné knihovně](#)

⁵ Viz např. příl. č. 2: Průběžná zpráva o plnění Koncepce rozvoje knihoven v ČR na léta 2017 – 2020 v letech 2017 a 2018, opatření 2.7 Rozvíjet regionální funkce knihoven, p. 35 ad.

⁶ [Zákon č. 257/2001 Sb., o knihovnách a podmínkách provozování veřejných knihovnických a informačních služeb \(knihovní zákon\)](#)

⁷ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

The absence of systemic cooperation between libraries and schools is due both to the lack of interest on the part of school management and to practical obstacles⁸ to such cooperation, such as the range and quality of library provision. In a number of cases, the obstacles have been overcome by the will of a common founder when the school and the library are run by the same local authority. However, when institutions have different founders, cooperation can be difficult.

The area of lifelong and civic education is not sufficiently legislated in the Czech Republic. Initiatives in this area are also uncoordinated and, due to the fragmentation of activities, without the necessary synergies. Only vocational education (MLSA) has legislative support; other areas, especially civic education, are dealt with by partial, uncoordinated projects. On the one hand, this represents an interesting opportunity for libraries to have a certain excess of demand over supply, but on the other hand, this situation complicates the support and provision of such activities. There is still no inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, or other ministries, at least at the level of memoranda. In addition to the Library Act, other laws have a significant impact on the activities of libraries, e.g., legislation on compulsory copying, personal data protection, copyright, etc.

The amendment to the Copyright Act (No. 121/2000 Coll.), implemented by Act No. 102/2017 Coll., introduced the institute of extended collective management, allowing the granting of licences for certain uses of works by libraries registered in the register of libraries maintained by the Ministry of Culture under the Library Act. In 2019, a collective bulk licencing agreement was concluded between the Czech Republic National Library and the collective rights managers DILIA and OOA-S, which enables access through libraries to digitised documents unavailable on the market (digitised books and periodicals published in the Czech Republic before 2007). The basic service – reading the document – is free of charge for libraries and users. This provides access to an important part of cultural and scientific heritage.

Directive (EU) 2019/790 on copyright in the digital single market and, once implemented, the future amendment of the AZ will also bring wider regulation of extended collective management for licencing works not available on the market. While the current legislation adopted by the 2017 AZ amendment only covers books and magazines not available on the market, the new regulation should apply to any copyrighted content, i.e., also to maps, graphics, posters, postcards, sound documents, etc. (as exemplified in the strategic part of the Concept Paper in chapter “III Libraries as guardians of cultural and knowledge-based heritage” on page 26, third paragraph). The new legislation will allow libraries to make works not available on the online market available throughout the EU and EEA countries on the basis of licencing agreements with collective rights managers.

In a global context, there is a paradigm shift in scholarly publishing. There is an increasing emphasis on open access not only to publications but also to research data, with a strong link to technological developments. The concept of open science, citizen science and open education emphasises the need to link research institutions, tertiary education, and memory institutions, including libraries of all types. Although the Czech Republic has proceeded to address this complex issue and individual national strategic documents are gradually being implemented in practice and within their scope are preparing the Czech environment for the targeted highly complex change, it must be stated that in the speed of overall implementation, the Czech Republic is slightly behind both developed countries, and Poland or Hungary. The development of the Internet and ICT is accompanied by an increasing number of electronic publications that are digital in origin (born-digital). These are documents published on the web, e-books, etc., which form an important part of cultural and scientific heritage. The role of libraries in this area is similar to that of printed documents, i.e., to collect them, process them, preserve them in the long term and then make them available to the public. The legislative and technical conditions and the programming and staffing capacities are not yet in place for the long-term preservation of digital data. Legislation on electronic compulsory copying is currently being discussed by the Chamber of Deputies.⁹ This is a first

⁸ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Metodický výklad MŠMT k novele zákona č. 563/2004 Sb., o pedagogických pracovnících](#)

⁹ Stav k únoru r. 2020: Novela knihovního zákona (č. 257/2001 Sb.), zákona o neperiodických publikacích (č. 37/1995 Sb.) a tiskového zákona (č. 46/2000 Sb.).

step in this area. In the future, it will be necessary to provide for the preservation of the whole range of contemporary creative content production: interactive content (games, including interactive educational content) and audio-visual documents, if they are not Czech cinematographic works (e.g., online supplements to printed publications), probably also other AV products of universities, institutes, non-governmental organisations, etc. The long-standing underestimation of the role of libraries is also a consequence of their inadequate spatial conditions. This also applies to the spatial situation of the Czech Republic National Library, which does not correspond to the requirements set for the most important libraries in Europe and the world and does not correspond to its legal and methodological obligations.

Economic factors

Libraries are not by definition commercial organisations, but they perform a public service and are therefore entirely dependent on the founder's contribution. The allocated budget usually covers mainly mandatory expenditure and does not respond flexibly to actual needs. The amount of funds allocated to the management, preservation and development of library collections is stagnating, and libraries often have to resign to the development and renewal of the material and technological base that is essential for their modern services. This problem affects not only the local level but also the central one. The financial security of the so-called centralised services provided by the Czech Republic National Library to the entire library system is not sufficient. It is often difficult to obtain funding for new activities resulting from, for example, the Copyright Act or the approval of new legislation on electronic compulsory copying.⁵⁵

Macroeconomists have predicted a stagnation or regression in the economic success of society in 2020, creating room for the growing importance of civil society centres, social work, culture, and education. The economic contribution of libraries to the state is not sufficiently reflected by the public administration. Pay conditions in libraries are a persistent threat to library staffing, particularly for younger employees or for specialist positions. Libraries cannot compete on the labour market, especially in larger cities. Other increased costs arise from the outdated infrastructure of the buildings used by libraries, their high energy consumption, and the increasing requirements to protect traditional and virtual documents, technology and people against fires, natural disasters, and terrorist attacks.

Support for libraries is dependent on economic cycles. Resources and tools for stable multi-source funding for community and educational roles of libraries are not in place, and inter-agency collaboration is absent in this sense (see political factors). There is a lack of systematic support for the development of libraries as educational, civic, and community institutions from state, county, and municipal budgets.

On the positive side, libraries can use funds from existing Ministry of Culture subsidy programmes or from subsidy programmes aimed at supporting research and development, which are used by university and specialised libraries and libraries with the status of a research organisation. Special-purpose funding will help the emergence of new methods, tools, and procedures, but it is difficult to ensure their implementation, sustainability and necessary development within the framework of the normal operating allowance.

For libraries in small municipalities, support for regional library functions, funded by regions and provided by regional libraries through designated libraries, is particularly important. The shortcoming is that the extent of support has been significantly reduced in some regions compared to the original allocation of funds from the state budget, which is the reason for the different quality of library service.¹⁰

At the national level, there is a lack of support for the spatial provision of community functions in municipalities (at the level of functional architecture, i.e., barrier-free), while the need for such spaces is increasing. The support for equipping reconstructed libraries in the South Moravian and Olomouc regions is very positive.

¹⁰ [Výroční zprávy o výkonu regionálních funkcí v ČR](#)

Trends related to the development of technology lead to the need to adapt the educational environment and to change the educational content and the way it is delivered¹¹. If such a transformation takes place successfully, it will lead to economic development of society, creation of new jobs and an overall improvement in the quality of life. If it fails, it will further widen the mismatch in the knowledge and skills needed, and therefore lead to greater inequality and polarisation of society¹². It is estimated that 1.3 million employees in the Czech Republic will have some of their mainly routine skills replaced by technology within 5 years, and 2.2 million employees within 15 years¹³. *The National Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in the Czech Republic*¹⁴ underlines the key role of education in the transformation of the economy and society and highlights the need to change the education system and the development of lifelong learning. Education in the Czech Republic is generally considered a priority contributing to sustainable economic development, but often it is only a declaratory level without sufficient financial support.

One of the objectives of the *Digital Economy and Society concept*¹⁵ (part of the Digital Czech Republic programme) is *to develop relevant skills and knowledge of members of society and to create a modern labour market with high standards. The development of so-called “digital skills” of citizens is key, including in the role of consumers whose rights are valid and up-to-date even in the digital age and who are aware of their rights and are motivated to enforce them. This is the only way to ensure that development and economic growth in this area is inclusive and brings greater stability to society.* Equal access to information resources, regardless of an individual's socio-economic status, is similarly important. The existence of libraries as institutions guaranteeing equal and free access to information is crucial.

Social factors

The public still primarily perceives libraries as places to borrow books. However, this image of libraries is no longer sustainable in modern society and, in particular, does not correspond to reality. Libraries enable access to current artistic and professional production in all forms, provide access to cultural heritage and the latest knowledge, create conditions for the creation of new values and offer a space for active leisure. The expectations of current and potential users are generally the same: fast, comfortably, here, and now and ideally free of charge. There is a group of potential users for whom the content of library services could be important, but they do not yet make use of their services, usually because they are not comfortable with the poor image of libraries, represented by outdated equipment, unfashionable spaces, and unattractive accessibility. In some places, civic life and the principles of civic responsibility are not sufficiently developed. However, there is a growing interest in self-education and involvement in community life and work. Libraries can be, and in some places already are, the optimal space for the development of civil society.¹⁶

The Czech Republic's population has been growing for a long time, mainly due to migration.¹⁷ However, the working age population has been on a downward trend over the last decade. The overall population is ageing and the number of seniors in society is progressively increasing. The principles of intergenerational solidarity are not fully developed and ensured in society. At the same time as the age structure is changing,

¹¹ OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, [Trends Shaping Education 2019](#)

¹² MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

¹³ MINISTERSTVO PRÁCE A OBCHODU, [Národní strategie umělé inteligence v České republice](#)

¹⁴ dtto

¹⁵ DZURILLA Vladimír, OČKO Petr a kol. [Digitální ekonomika a společnost](#)

¹⁶ PROTIVÍNSKÝ Tomáš a Petr ČÁP, [Občanské vzdělávání v knihovnách](#). Analytická zpráva vytvořená ve spolupráci Centra občanského vzdělávání Masarykovy univerzity a Svazu knihovníků a informačních pracovníků České republiky.

¹⁷ ČESKÝ STATISTICKÝ ÚŘAD, [Aktuální populační vývoj v kostce](#)

there is also a change in the structure of the population of different age groups according to marital status.¹⁸ The traditional family model is changing and the number of single parents, especially female mothers, is increasing. A persistent trend is the outflow of young people to large cities. Urban-rural polarisation is increasing and the importance of regions and their support by the state is growing. There is a polarisation of opinions in society and an increase in intolerance and hate speech¹⁹. As a result of migration,²⁰ the composition of Czech society is changing, and its heterogeneity is increasing. Nevertheless, a negative attitude towards minorities persists in society, which presents opportunities for libraries. The state strives to ensure that citizens have the right to access all the information the state holds about them,²¹ but society is divided into different levels of digital literacy.²² This fact also poses a significant challenge for the activities of libraries. Socio-economic problems that cannot be underestimated in the long-term are, for example, increasing poverty, people's indebtedness, and other economic uncertainties²³. The problem of loneliness and abandonment (across generations) is increasing. The number of people with disabilities and carers is increasing. Environmental issues and climate change are affecting society and will continue to do so in the future.

All of the above factors support the importance of public spaces such as libraries, which naturally promote intergenerational dialogue and are accessible without any barriers.

Inequalities in access to quality education are an important and growing domestic problem. There are significant differences in the quality of education between and within regions. Pupils' educational outcomes and their future life chances are strongly dependent on family background and largely influenced by the municipality in which the child lives. In this respect, the Czech Republic is one of the worst Member States of comparable economic condition in the OECD²⁴.

Libraries are positively perceived by the public and, according to research, they are also regarded as useful institutions²⁵. Their primary function is cultural, while the educational role of libraries is often only perceived by the public as promoting reading, especially for children. Other educational activities of the library, e.g., in the field of information work and the development of digital competences, are perceived by the public as surprising.

Demand for lifelong learning and civic education is often not directed towards libraries, although many libraries offer it. Similarly, the public is not sufficiently aware of the breadth of resources that libraries offer. People often rely only on freely available resources on the internet or use the offerings of commercial or non-commercial providers of lifelong learning, neglecting the library as an institution that can help them develop knowledge and skills. In this context, cooperation between libraries and local public space actors has great potential, for example, in regional rural development projects (MAS, MAP and KAP).

teachers, educational content, and methods and creates a strong competition to traditional academic education²⁶. This is contrasted with the mostly missing competences of teachers (especially in primary and secondary schools) in the field of information literacy, including copyright issues²⁷. The development

¹⁸ ČESKÝ STATISTICKÝ ÚŘAD, [Vývoj obyvatelstva České republiky 2018](#), p. 8-16, chapter 1: Obyvatelstvo podle věku a rodinného stavu

¹⁹ MINISTERSTVO VNITRA, [Čtvrtletní zprávy o extremismu Odboru bezpečnostní politiky MV](#)

²⁰ ČESKÝ STATISTICKÝ ÚŘAD, [Cizinci: Počet cizinců](#)

²¹ [Zákon o právu na digitální služby a o změně některých zákonů č. 12/2020 Sb.](#)

²² ČESKÝ STATISTICKÝ ÚŘAD, [Počítačové dovednosti](#)

²³ ČESKÝ STATISTICKÝ ÚŘAD, [Příjmová chudoba ohrožuje necelou desetinu obyvatel](#)

²⁴ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

²⁵ Viz podrobněji: TRÁVNÍČEK Jiří. [Čtenáři a čtení v ČR \(2018\)](#); PRÁZOVÁ, Irena kol., *České děti jako čtenáři*; QUICK, Susannah a kol., [Názory uživatelů na přínosy informačních a komunikačních technologií ve veřejných knihovnách v České republice](#)

²⁶ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

²⁷ Viz aktuální Tematická zpráva ČŠI týkající se průzkumu informační gramotnosti z r. 2018. Available from: <https://www.csicr.cz/cz/Aktuality/Tematicka-zprava-Rozvoj-informacni-gramotnosti-na>

of these competences in pupils is not properly embedded in the content of curriculum documents (Framework Education Programme). Primary and secondary schools lack functional methodological support in the curatorial selection of information resources for teaching. Cooperation between schools and libraries as places with up-to-date print and electronic collections and knowledge of working with information resources is not sufficiently developed and seen as a priority.²⁸

Czech university students have a significant academic failure rate in comparison to other European countries.²⁹ Among the impact factors described³⁰ are the social integration of newly enrolled students and students' problems with orientation in the university environment. Research shows that the library can help to reduce academic failure, especially for first-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds or from abroad, by offering appropriate services and activities³¹ and by connecting actors involved in student support.³²

Internationalisation is a persistent trend in tertiary education and research.³³ Support for the mobility of Czech and foreign students and teachers is growing and is also desirable in connection with the development of international study programmes. Therefore, it is therefore necessary to focus on the readiness of university support services, including libraries, especially in offering adequate services and resources in sufficient quantity and quality in English.

Technological factors

The cycles of technological innovation are shortening, which raises the need for general development of digital competences. New technologies also require an appropriate response to user needs from the institutions that communicate or should communicate through them.

The rapid development of digital technologies has had a profound societal and global impact, and has been an important factor in democratising access to information and education (e.g., Wikipedia, TED conferences, Khan Academy, webinars, e-books). Large technology companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, etc. have a significant impact on information communication, in addition to the lack of adequate infrastructure for verifying the veracity and reliability of information.

An important phenomenon of the educational process is the relationship of educational actors to digital technologies. Phenomena are entering into the functioning of society that have an impact on education and lifelong learning, as well as on the interaction of individuals with information, mainly in the online environment (e.g., social networks, data protection, changes in leisure time, cyberbullying, increase in misinformation and fake news). Therefore, it is essential to develop the competences of a critical approach to the use of digital technologies in pupils, students and within lifelong learning.³⁴

Therefore, the partial goals of the *Digital Czech Republic* programme include *measures to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of digitalisation and the so-called fourth industrial revolution on both those citizens who use their capabilities and those who use them excessively or are dependent on them. Particular attention must be paid to citizens who may be excluded and, as a result, give rise to new types of minorities. The ability of the country's population to participate in the digital economy, use its benefits and withstand its negative impacts must be enhanced.*³⁵

²⁸ PILLEROVÁ a kol., [Současný stav spolupráce ve vzdělávání mezi veřejnými knihovnami a školami](#)

²⁹ KAISER Frans a kol., [Dropout and Completion in Higher Education in Europe](#), p. 16

³⁰ FISCHER Jakub a kol., [EUROSTUDENT VI: Základní výsledky šetření postojů a životních podmínek studentů vysokých škol v České republice](#), p. 23

³¹ OLIVEIRA, Silas M., The academic library's role in student retention: a review of the literature

³² SEAL, Robert A., [Resource Sharing Begins at Home: Opportunities for Library Partnerships on a University Campus](#)

³³ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Akční plán mezinárodní spolupráce ČR ve výzkumu a internacionalizaci prostředí výzkumu a vývoje v ČR na léta 2017-2020](#)

³⁴ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

³⁵ DZURILLA Vladimír, OČKO Petr a kol., [Digitální ekonomika a společnost](#)

Libraries are places for public and free Internet access, which is the access point to digitised agendas and public administration systems. However, many libraries do not have high-speed internet connections.

The advent and competition of digital media, technological developments, changes in society and other factors are affecting library operations. The expectations and requirements of their users are changing. Information is no longer dependent on physical media, and there is a growing demand to acquire and access information in digital form. While some print media are declining in importance (e.g., newspapers and magazines), the traditional printed book retains its importance, as evidenced by the continued or increasing volume of publishing output. E-books and audio books are becoming an important complement to make better use of text documents.

The traditional library stock stored in physical media (not only in the form of written and printed books, but also in the form of gramophones or CDs) is threatened by the gradual ageing of organic matter and it is necessary to look for methods and tools to protect and extend their life. The long-term preservation of the ever-increasing volume of digital documents is an extremely complex and costly problem. The issue of long-term preservation primarily concerns libraries with preservation responsibilities, but also extends to other areas. Long-term preservation requires the continuous building of a complex and costly infrastructure, as well as ensuring its operation and development while keeping abreast of the latest trends. Libraries need to respond to the development and use of the latest technologies, e.g., in social networking, robotics, artificial intelligence, RFID, information visualisation, machine translation, use of open-source software, data linking, etc. Open-source computer software is increasingly used in digital technologies alongside commercial solutions to enable participation in technology communities.

Libraries are trying to adapt to the emergence of new technologies; this has long been supported by the MK VISK subsidy programme, which technological equipment innovation, standardisation and the development of central systems that can be used by all libraries.

Sectoral (internal) analysis

Employees

Surveys of the educational, age and salary structure of library employees show several trends. These include the high percentage of employees without education in connection with libraries (up to 47%), the high feminisation of the sector (87%) and the ageing of library employees (41% of employees are over 50 years old). The number of library directors and managers without a degree is also increasing. While the average age of an employee in the country is currently 43 years, the largest demographic group of employees in public libraries consists of women aged 51-60³⁶. The proportion of young employees in libraries is on a downward trend. A positive trend is that the proportion of staff with a university degree is steadily increasing (39%). A characteristic feature is the limited turnover of employees (60% of employees have been working in the library for more than 10 years). The salary situation in libraries continues to be poor (the average salary is about 25% below the national average).³⁷ The long-term underestimation of the library profession's prestige in the eyes of society is therefore a risk factor, which is reflected in the self-reflection of the profession by librarians themselves. The low prestige of the profession is mainly due to low financial remuneration. Nevertheless, they perceive libraries as a friendly and stable employer. The demands placed on libraries are increasing and cover a wide range of specialisations.

The expansion of the library's functions faces the limitation of employee capacity. First of all, the library must provide its basic (traditional) functions, which are used by the vast majority of current library users.

³⁶ RICHTER Vít a Vladana PILLEROVÁ, [Analýza věkové, vzdělanostní a mzdové struktury pracovníků knihoven ČR](#)

³⁷ RICHTER Vít a Vladana PILLEROVÁ, [Analýza věkové, vzdělanostní a mzdové struktury pracovníků knihoven ČR](#), 16

In the case of expanding its functions to include community and other activities, it is necessary to find reserves in its own operations or to find support from its founder. The request for increased library capacity must be supported by factual arguments and the benefits of the new activities to the municipality (community) must be demonstrated. Insufficient staffing often leads to overloading employees and loss of interest in transforming the library. In particular, information technology use makes it possible to increase the efficiency of traditional services, but its effect is more pronounced in larger libraries and has little effect in smaller libraries with a low number of users and a low range of opening hours. Despite these problems, the number of libraries expanding community activities has been growing in the long term.

Therefore, the success of library transformation is influenced by the degree to which librarians are motivated to change its function and open up their capacity to develop new roles. Although many libraries have already implemented community activities³⁸ in their operations, there is a lack of targeted support for this area, a system of training and methodological support for staff in community competencies. It is necessary to focus on the transfer of experience between library employees for specific cases of community work. Librarianship is a public service that requires excellent communication skills and a general awareness in addition to one's own expertise. Libraries employ high-quality professionals who not only provide traditional activities related to the management of collections but are also able to carry out highly specialised activities that are in demand by contemporary society. However, there is a lack of qualified employees motivated to implement strategic objectives and change existing deeply rooted processes. There is room for finding ways to increase their motivation, lifelong learning, and personal development. Especially in smaller libraries, there is a dramatic shortage of employees capable of creating and delivering digital content services (digital curators). In specialised libraries, there is a lack of employee orientation in scholarly communication issues. In the area of library staffing policy, there is still a problem with job sharing, job flexibility and the use of modern staffing approaches. Support for library management training is insufficient.

Librarians' competences in public education vary. Pedagogical disciplines occupy a marginal place in the curriculum of library education; librarians acquire these skills and knowledge mainly through practice. Some (especially large) libraries have employees with primarily pedagogical training. Sharing of experience also takes place at regional and national level. Nevertheless, it can be said that there is still considerable room for human resource development in this area.

The professional library community cooperates with universities in the field and monitors their standards. The field of secondary education is not sufficiently linked to the professional community. The problem is that a significant number of library graduates do not join the library profession. The main reason for this is low pay. The way out of this difficult situation is to focus on reskilling studies provided by selected central libraries. The Concept of Lifelong Learning for Librarians³⁹, the Standard for Public Library and Information Services⁴⁰, the definition of professional library qualifications according to the National Qualification System have been developed. The Ministry of Culture financially supports the training of library employees through the VISK programme. With the development of libraries and the provision of new services in some libraries, there is a need for new positions. For example, the position of a continuing education lecturer exists as a standard position in the job catalogue and in the National Occupational Classification System but is not part of the field training.

³⁸ Viz příl. č. 2 Průběžná zpráva o plnění, p. 17 ad. , analogicky k rostoucímu počtu vzdělávacích a kulturních akcí v knihovnách, jejich návštěvníků i knihoven, které akce pořádají

³⁹ [Koncepte celoživotního vzdělávání knihovníků](#)

⁴⁰ MINISTERSTVO KULTURY, [Metodický pokyn Ministerstva kultury k vymezení standardu VKIS](#)

Library collections

Insufficient funding for the purchase of literature and other information resources is a persistent and determining problem in Czech libraries. The library collections of a substantial part of libraries operated by municipalities are outdated and not current, although the Ministry of Culture has developed a Methodological Instruction on defining the standard of replenishment and updating the library collection for libraries established and/or operated by municipalities in the Czech Republic. This is one of the reasons for the decline in borrowing of traditional printed documents. There is a lack of sufficient funding for the purchase of quality domestic literary production and foreign literature (foreign-language fiction, foreign popular and educational literature, language guides) for the general public and literature for national minorities, although a project to add foreign literature to library collections is being implemented with funding from the Ministry of Culture and contemporary Czech literature is being acquired for library collections under the Czech Library project. The proportion of the population whose first language is not Czech is increasing, e.g., in Prague it is now one in seven. According to foreign experience, public libraries are particularly important integration points with a positive influence on the development of a multicultural society. The lack of funding for the acquisition of documents undermines this role, and it can be assumed that the place of libraries will be taken by more attractive, better funded activities, the resulting effect of which will be rather anti-integration (closing national and cultural groups into one another). The socially necessary acquisition of this literature should be encouraged, and the continued production of bilingual editions of key works of domestic literature should also be supported.

In some regions, funding for the purchase of books and other documents for exchange collections under the regional library functions programme, which is funded by the regions, has also been stagnant for a long time. Exchange collections are an important and effective tool for supporting and updating library collections in small municipalities. For example, in 2009, 39.4 million CZK was allocated for the purchase of library collections. In 2018, the figure decreased to just 30.4 million CZK.⁴¹

The lack of funding negatively affects acquisition activities, especially the profiling and structure of collections. There is a very uneven situation in the possibilities of purchasing information resources between individual libraries and regions. For example, e-books, which are popular with readers, are almost completely absent in some regional and most smaller libraries, although the Ministry of Culture provides one-time support for introducing their lending under the VISK subsidy programme. There is also a shortage of scientific literature for lifelong learning, depending on local needs.

Libraries have rich experience in supporting the learning process by offering information resources. However, these too need to be further developed. Libraries often stick to offering only their own collections and do not effectively offer other information resources to users - whether physical collections through interlibrary borrowings or electronic information resources online. For years, libraries have been using the VISK 8 sub-programme "Information Resources" supported by the Ministry of Culture. The key role in the future should be played by the Knihovny.cz (Libraries.cz) portal and the Získej (Get) service. Libraries have unique and extensive library collections, which are available through digital libraries and archives thanks to ongoing digitalisation. These are becoming more user-friendly. There is also a gradually building infrastructure for the long-term preservation of physical and digital documents, but both are limited by financial and organisational constraints. Another challenge for the future is in the area of e-born documents, which do not yet have clear standards on how to work with them and offer them.

Another factor that brings previously unattainable opportunities for libraries to strengthen their reach is, for example, the aforementioned access to digital documents – works not available on the market or the planned possibilities of text data mining for research and scholarly purposes.

The establishment of the National Centre for Electronic Information Resources (CzechELib) has improved the coordination of the purchase and use of the most frequently used titles of electronic information resources for research, development, and education. Continued funding needs to be secured beyond the end of the current project in 2022. Open repositories are still underused as free information resources for

⁴¹ [Výroční zpráva o plnění regionálních funkcí krajských knihoven na území ČR za rok 2018, p. 29](#)

university and scientific works. A Concept for a National System of Analytical Bibliography was developed but has not been implemented. Consequently, the ANL database is insufficiently replenished, which prevents its full use. It has not been possible to build a national centre for sound heritage.

Technology

Libraries provide access to databases, information resources, free internet access. However, in many locations, libraries do not provide access to high-speed internet. Good quality internet connection is a prerequisite for the expansion of libraries' digital services.

Technological solutions make it possible to create new tools for reaching out to the public and involving citizens in public institutions and decision-making processes, as well as to increase the comfort of citizens in interacting with public administration, for example by introducing virtual or digital identities for citizens. The number of libraries serving as authentication and assistance points is slowly increasing.

Libraries are trying to respond to the development of technology. In the public sector, they are among the most active and among memory institutions, they are the leaders. However, there are large differences conditioned by the type, size and location of the library and the community they serve. The technologies used are diverse, ranging from 3D printers, robots, virtual reality to sewing machines. Nevertheless, many libraries lack new technologies, and their technical equipment is outdated, even though the Ministry of Culture annually announces a special subsidy for equipping especially municipal libraries with the necessary computer technologies. Equipment related to the preservation and access to collections (climate control and maintenance systems, fire extinguishing and security systems, mechanisation and robotisation in warehouses, RFID technology, etc.) is also insufficient).⁴²

Educational technologies have not yet fully penetrated libraries. The number of libraries using educational technologies for both face-to-face and distance learning (interactive whiteboards, electronic learning materials, webinars, and online consultations) is only slowly increasing. The potential for digital learning is not sufficiently exploited in libraries. In addition to the financial resources needed to implement educational technologies in the daily activities of libraries, there is a lack of employees with the necessary digital and didactic competences.

Digitalisation of library collections creates conditions for the preservation and wide accessibility of cultural and scientific heritage for the needs of science, innovation, education, creativity and personal development of the population, including ensuring their accessibility in the European and global context. Libraries have long invested in the digitalisation of library collections. In the past period, libraries have built up basic capacities and tools for digitalisation - digitalisation lines, software tools for digitalisation and its coordination, including standards (e.g., Digitalisation Register, Resolver URN: NBN, Comprehensive Validator NDK, Czech National Catalogue and Czech National Bibliography). A National Concept for the Long-term Preservation of Digital Data in Libraries has been developed and standards for digitalisation and long-term preservation have been created. These tools contribute to mutual coordination and significantly reduce the risk of duplicate digitalisation. In cooperation with Google, a major PPP project was also implemented to digitise the historical library collections of the National Library of the Czech Republic.

The Central Library Portal, which should serve as the main access point for facilitating access to services and information resources of libraries providing public library and information services throughout the Czech Republic, runs in routine operation.

Library systems operate in a complex heterogeneous environment. The systems not only cooperate with each other, but also with other memory institutions and entities from the commercial sphere. An important problem that libraries have to address continuously is the inconsistency of data in library systems. This problem makes it impossible to automate some activities effectively and invalidates their results. At the same time, it also leads to higher demands for manual processing and validation, which are both time-

⁴² RICHTER Vít a Vladana PILLEROVÁ. [Průzkum prostorového a technického vybavení veřejných knihoven ČR](#), p. 16

consuming and costly. For this reason, it is necessary to support the development of central services such as Knihovny.cz, the Comprehensive Catalogue of the Czech Republic, Obálky knih (Book Covers), the Virtual National Phonothèque, the CENTRAL project, etc. and to attract other libraries to use them.

The subsidy programme of the Ministry of Culture creates positive pressure to respect the standards. There are technological factors to which libraries are currently unable to respond adequately: the information explosion (costless multiplication of information without the ability to navigate in it), the use of data and social networks in referendums, elections and influencing society-wide moods, decisions, etc. There are only a small number of information technology professionals working in libraries.

The key element is the technological innovations generated by research projects in specialised libraries, which are then used by other libraries. Alternative solutions to commercial products are being developed and the use of open-source software is widespread.

Library facilities

User demands for library interiors and facilities for enjoyable use of library services, creation of new cultural content, relaxation and socialising are increasing, and libraries are responding with a gradual transformation. Library spaces are important for fulfilling the library's role as an educational, cultural and community centre. These are not only classrooms and study rooms, but also places that support access to information resources of different types, as well as spaces for meeting, sharing experience and communication. Such spaces should be barrier-free, taking into account the specificities of different target and age groups. The form of a specific library space is determined by the priorities and financial possibilities of the founder/operator.

Space provision for library activities is one of the most important limiting factors for future development. Approximately 40% of public libraries do not have sufficient space for meeting and community activities. In a third of public libraries, no investment or interior renovation has taken place in the last 20 years. Despite a number of investment activities in libraries, the long-standing investment neglect in this area has not been completely eliminated. Half of public libraries do not have barrier-free access to their buildings, with the worst situation for libraries in the smallest municipalities with less than 1,000 inhabitants (61%). More than 40% of libraries do not have barrier-free access throughout the library, with the worst situation being in libraries in the smallest municipalities with less than 1,000 inhabitants. Libraries are mostly housed in premises that were not primarily built for library and educational activities. A third of public libraries do not have sufficient space for educational activities, and they also lack space for art and creative workshops.⁴³

Most university libraries currently operate in new or upgraded buildings. The construction of the National Technical Library and the Moravian Library is a great success. Thanks to the support of the IROP programme, most of the regional libraries have been modernised and expanded, whereas the regional libraries of the Moravian-Silesian and Olomouc regions are still operating in old and inadequate buildings. Libraries with the right of compulsory copying have to provide premises for storing this collection, which is part of the national cultural heritage. The Vysočina region is completing the construction of a new regional library without financial participation from other budgets.

Currently, there is no systematic support for financing the reconstruction or construction of adequate buildings for public libraries.

The spatial situation of the National Library as the centre of the library system, which has an irreplaceable role in the areas of building, preserving, and making available historical and modern conservation and other unique collections, is unsatisfactory in the long term. The progress of the reconstruction of Klementinum and the construction of depositories in Hostivař so far shows that even after the completion of the planned works, the seat of the Czech Republic National Library in Klementinum will not be able to meet requirements set by users for a modern national library. The only promising solution is constructing a new building.

⁴³ RICHTER Vít a Vladana PILLEROVÁ. [Průzkum prostorového a technického vybavení veřejných knihoven ČR](#), p. 16

Methodologically, the *Methodological Centre for Library Construction and Reconstruction of the Ministry of Culture* is partly responsible for the construction and reconstruction of library premises. A Methodological Guideline for the construction, reconstruction and furnishing of libraries established and/or operated by municipalities in the Czech Republic has been prepared, which follows up on the Recommendation issued by the National Library⁴⁴. There is a methodological guide *Equal Access - Standard Handicap Friendly*⁴⁵ which is, among other things, devoted to issues of equal and barrier-free access to information resources and library services.

Libraries and their employees are not sufficiently prepared for unexpected situations (hacker or terrorist attacks, natural disasters).

Processes, management

An increasing number of libraries are expanding their functions as educational, cultural, and community centres. This is evidenced by data from analyses conducted in 2018. However, these analyses also show that there are still many libraries that do not exhibit any such activities. These are mostly libraries in smaller communities where it is very difficult to expand activities.

Libraries have the ability to collaborate on central projects and to disseminate new ideas, services and products through the library network. Expanding the library's function as a community centre is a long-term process that brings with it changes in the functioning of the whole organisation and new approaches and management methods (learning organisation principle). In order to implement specialised training programmes, libraries use effective cooperation with other partners (various public and private entities) who provide the necessary expertise, while the library provides, to the best of its ability, the facilities, organisational support and promotion of the event. Cooperation can work both ways. In this way, (especially small) libraries can significantly expand their range of educational events. There is a great opportunity in developing a network of cooperating institutions (non-profit, other contributory organisations and private entities cooperating with libraries on a regular basis) and in seeking synergies and cooperation. Not all libraries are involved in community activities in their location.

There are no programmes at the level of municipal governments, regions, and most government bodies to support and integrate minorities through libraries.

Libraries also do not have specialised methodologies and methodological support to work with the theme of sustainability and sustainable communities⁴⁶, participation, partnership and public participation in decision making. Support for community activities has been included in the standard for the performance of regional library functions⁴⁷. The Public Libraries Section of SKIP is active in this area with successful implementation of some projects.

From the perspective of planning the development of educational and community activities of libraries, the lack of systematically conducted surveys of the educational and information needs of the community and evaluation tools to assess the quality and impact of the educational and community events already implemented is limiting.

Evaluation of library activities is based mainly on quantitative performance indicators, lacking qualitative evaluation parameters. However, even libraries themselves make little use of qualitative, statistical, and sociological methods for their internal needs and are therefore often unable to demonstrate the effectiveness of their activities and services to their founders (reader surveys, questionnaires, standard statistical data collection). The analytical use of big data is also a challenge for the future.

⁴⁴ NÁRODNÍ KNIHOVNA, [Doporučení pro výstavbu, rekonstrukci a zařizování knihoven zřizovaných a/nebo provozovaných obcemi na území České republiky](#)

⁴⁵ CERNÍÁKOVÁ Eva a kol., [Rovný přístup Standard Handicap Friendly](#)

⁴⁶ SDRUŽENÍ PRO ROZVOJ OBCÍ A REGIONŮ, [Cestovní ruch a udržitelný rozvoj](#), p. 20 - 25

⁴⁷ [Metodický pokyn MK k zajištění výkonu regionálních funkcí knihoven a jejich koordinaci na území ČR](#)

Marketing and communication

Libraries have long been presented, for historical reasons, as guardians of the cultural and knowledge-based wealth of a nation and the whole of civilisation. Their communication to the public and to their founders has also long been subordinated to this role. Today, libraries are seeking to change this narrow view. This does not mean that these traditional functions of libraries have been exhausted. In the context of mass digitalisation and the production of new digital content, these roles are changing and also expanding. Libraries are also beginning to disseminate their content using modern technologies - in the form of digital libraries and social networks. However, these activities are often limited to the activities of active individuals without the existence of coherent PR strategies.

Libraries are currently not perceived or used as tools for civil society development. Libraries do not yet sufficiently explain their role in a changing society. The opportunity is to unify marketing and build a support system for marketing and PR activities, especially for small libraries. At the local level, the needs of the community in relation to libraries are not sufficiently explored. Where there is a lack of analysis of users' information and learning needs, there is a failure to effectively link library resources (information, competencies, facilities) to community needs. This may also be the cause of a lack of targeting of service offerings and information resources to the needs of a particular school, a particular teacher, or a group of students, making future collaboration difficult.

Libraries do not emphasise their educational role enough in public communication; for historical reasons, they often present themselves primarily as cultural institutions. This is also reflected in public expectations and the fact that some library operators consider direct educational activities such as courses, seminars, workshops, and lectures for the public to be more of an extra-curricular activity. Where the library communicates its educational role well and formulates a clear and attractive offer, it also generates demand from the public.

Library system SWOT analysis

Strengths • The most extensive network of cultural and educational facilities with a nationwide reach • Knowledge of “their” environment, its needs, priorities, and potential for community links • Ability to respond to and positively shape social demand • Ability to collaborate with each other on central projects (Knihovny.cz, the Comprehensive Catalogue of the Czech Republic, Night with Andersen), to cooperate with other memory institutions, to share examples of good practice • Ability to organise quality cultural events and use them to create a positive image of libraries towards the public and their founders • Supporting regional traditions and local memory • Existence of rich and unique library collections made available to the public in print and digital form • Ensuring free, equal, and free access to information and knowledge • Ensuring safe and free access to information/data, technology, and high-speed internet • Experience in supporting users in working with information • Existence of advanced technical solutions - Knihovny.cz portal, Získej (Get) service, repositories, existence of proven central software solutions, open interfaces • Workers with a positive attitude to the library and their work, willing to learn • Experts and specialists following current social trends with a vision of the development in the field	Weaknesses • Lack of systemic cooperation between libraries and public administration and local government • Libraries are not sufficiently anchored in strategic materials for the development of municipalities and regions • Libraries are not legislatively anchored as educational institutions and are not perceived as such by the public • Libraries do not make sufficient use of participatory methods • Library funding does not reflect the new needs of library users and society • Fragmented marketing of services, insufficient surveys of user requirements at local level including effectiveness evaluation, lack of surveys of educational and information needs of the community • Evaluation tools for assessing the work of libraries, including educational activities and their impact, are not developed • Community roles of libraries are not supported in a targeted way by operators • Inadequate space for community and educational activities, inadequate equipment of libraries with the necessary technologies, their slow renewal • Lack of a new modern building for the National Library, similarly for the regional libraries of the Moravian-Silesian and Olomouc regions • Libraries offer little attractive and up-to-date electronic content • Insufficient capacity for long-term preservation of print and digital content, lack of national	I n t e r n a l f a c t o r s
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	depository system for physical collections • Unpreparedness of libraries for sudden threats (natural disasters, hacker attacks, etc.) • Insufficient financial and staffing provision of centralised services of the Czech Republic National Library for other libraries in the system (e.g., operation of the list of works unavailable on the market and remuneration to authors for making digital documents - works unavailable on the market available through libraries for 2020, etc.) • Insufficiently used digital resources and tools, poor quality internet connection • Lack of staff with the necessary pedagogical, andragogical and IT competences • Insufficient support for library management training • Low willingness of some employees to innovate and to continue their education • Failure to ensure adequate financial remuneration for professional staff • Insufficient competences in the field of scientific communication among employees working in university libraries	
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Opportunities • Libraries are perceived positively by society • Libraries are an instrument of state cultural policy • Existence of special legislation for libraries • Existence of subsidy programmes for libraries • Digitalisation of state agendas • The state guarantees citizens the right to digital services • Economic stagnation or recession brings room for growth in the importance of civil society centres, social work, culture, and education • People are looking for friendly, non-conflicting and safe environment, spaces for sharing, meeting and for developing creative activities • Libraries as a place for stable and safe access to the internet and digital content • The emergence of digital media • Changing user expectations and demands for access to electronic content • The possibility of negotiating royalties for electronic content to incentivise rights holders to use libraries as one of their “business channels” • Support for the development of high-speed internet access • Growing importance of regions and government support for their development • Increasing proportion of older population (traditional library users) in the social composition of society • Increasing heterogeneity of society • Negative attitude of part of society towards minorities represents an opportunity for libraries • Willingness of volunteers to organise community activities • Growing need for lifelong and civic education • New technologies for education usable by libraries • Schools need quality information resources and access to them; MAS,	Threats • Cooperation between central government authorities in relation to libraries is not developed • Labour market situation (low wages in the public sector) • Increasing competition in the supply of commercial and non-commercial education, declining information value of libraries • Competition from online education • Few buildings built specifically for library purposes, libraries operating in old, inadequate buildings, problems in constructing new buildings • Lack of financial resources to acquire, preserve and make available library collections • Data protection rules limit the provision of public services in libraries • Threats to physical documents from degradation of information media • Insufficient operational funding for tools and innovative practices developed through project funding	E x t e r n a l f a c t o r s
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MAP and KAP represent a room for cooperation with libraries • The new paradigm of scientific publishing (Open Access, Open Science, Open Data) places new demands on the competences of researchers, possible role of libraries		
Positive factors	Negative factors	

B. Strategic part

I. Libraries as pillars of civil society development and natural centres of communities

Libraries are one of the pillars of a functioning democratic society and a symbol of free-thinking. They are a natural part of communities. The network of libraries represents thousands of places across the country that serve to directly fulfil the principles of democracy by providing equal access to information and room for discussion and meeting.

From the very beginning of modern public libraries, their key task has been to humanise society. One of the pillars on which T. G. Masaryk and the founders of modern Czech society anchored democracy is its ethical concept. If for them democracy was a view of life based on trust in people and humanity, then libraries were an instrument for promoting this ethical principle. This function of libraries has not changed.

Libraries are built as institutions through which society has free access to relevant information and resources to help make decisions in the present about the future based on knowledge of the past. The tool of democracy is debate, and libraries serve to ensure that this debate is based on knowledge and mutual respect; their role is to encourage, provide space for and cultivate it. Democracy is a process, not a state, and libraries are a key part of democratic processes because they are for everyone and at available reach.

Libraries offer a free space for public debate and for sharing community interests. In this way, they are institutions that contribute to shaping and consolidating the core values of society, transmitting, and disseminating them. The content of this work is determined by their ability to create, manage, and make available resources for educational (pillar 2) and cultural activities (pillar 3). Educational and cultural activities, the ability of libraries to communicate with the public, and therefore their proactive relationship with partner institutions or associations play a key role in this pillar, which deals with the community function of libraries,^{48 49} and with libraries as instruments of democracy. However, it is the librarians themselves who are decisive – as cultured and educated democrats.

The role of libraries as democratic institutions is becoming increasingly important as we enter the information technology age. Today, libraries not only provide access to traditional printed documents, but also offer a vast array of high-quality electronic information resources. Linking the print and digital worlds of information promotes the universal dissemination of knowledge, which is a condition for the preservation of freedom, prerequisites for social equality, basis for economic success and intellectual and moral awareness of society. Libraries, through the targeted selection of information resources, create a room for the recognition of the value of information. It is not only about addressing information transfer technology and the development of information literacy, but also about shared discussion platforms, whether in the form of virtual or physical space.

Libraries have the advantage of operating in a specific place. They have a deep knowledge of the local community, are in daily contact with people and their needs, and are able to meet those needs. Their services have the potential to reach all generations and groups of people without any limitations. In

⁴⁸ JEŽKOVÁ, Zuzana, [Cesta ke komunitní knihovně](#): "Komunitní knihovna je takovou veřejnou knihovnou, která pomáhá komunitnímu rozvoji v konkrétním místě."

⁴⁹ MATOUŠEK, Oldřich, Slovník sociální práce, p. 87.: Komunitní rozvoj je definován jako "ovlivňování místní komunity, jehož cílem je zvýšit angažovanost občanů na místních problémech a zlepšit jejich kompetence potřebné pro řešení problémů."

addition, through their involvement in national and international library networks, libraries connect this particular place with the stimuli, themes and people that and who enable the incorporation of local identity into broader identification frameworks. Libraries are also a mediator that brings societal themes to the local level, enabling the involvement of wider sections of society and therefore the development of civil society. For this reason, they are a natural means of integration and inclusion. Libraries can also be a valid tool for communication between local authorities and citizens.

1. Vision 2030

Libraries are natural centres of civic and community life.

This role is anchored in the strategic materials of ministries and local governments and developed through a cooperative library system across the Czech Republic.

Libraries reinforce the principles of mutual respect and the importance of civic debate in society, help the flourishing of community life, develop the principles of participation, and actively connect different groups of people within a place or region. In their premises, they inspire and initiate discussions on municipal issues.

Libraries play an important role in the process of anchoring values in society and creating the conditions for the principle of mutual equality.

The State supports the role of libraries in the process of creating a society of educated, responsible and active citizens and ensures its implementation in a systematic way. Citizens are actively involved in and encourage the community activities of libraries.

2. Strategy for 2021 – 2027

Proposition

1. Libraries **encourage participation** in community life and provide an **open and safe space** for it. They are a natural meeting place for citizens to meet and discuss community issues, a link between elected government and citizens, and a place where social cohesion and trust are strengthened.
2. Libraries contribute to **regional identity development**, strengthen the relationship to the place, make a significant contribution to people's identification with the place in which they live, and therefore awaken their active civic interest in what surrounds them, strengthen their sense of continuity and interest in local history.
3. Libraries provide a **space for the activities** of different groups of people and are characterised by a rich cooperation with local organisations and institutions. They help **develop social capital**, foster **self-sufficiency**, and stimulate **local development**. They **respond flexibly to people's changing needs**, especially those of groups at risk of social exclusion. They make use of volunteering.
4. Libraries contribute to the **communication of societal issues at local level, promoting the principle of sharing, therefore helping to fulfil the principle of conscious consumption and minimising environmental impact**.
5. Libraries systematically innovate job positions and lifelong learning offers for their employees.

Strategic goals

1. Ensure equal access to information resources and availability of library services to all citizens
2. Develop the potential of libraries as community centres with active citizen participation
3. Develop the capacity of libraries to respond actively to the diverse needs of users
4. Support the development of regional identity through library activities
5. Include libraries as community centres in the strategic materials of state, regional and municipal authorities
6. Ensure the library's community functions through multi-source funding
7. Build adequate spatial, technological, and material facilities for the development of community activities of libraries, including support for the development of competent employees
8. Connect libraries to high-speed internet
9. Integrate courses and methods into the training of librarians that develop competencies in the community service function of libraries

II. Libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions

They promote an educated and socially cohesive society based on an economy with high added value of labour. They guarantee equal and free access to information. They connect actors in the field of education within communities. They partner with schools at all levels, educational institutions, research institutions and other educational institutions.

To supplement and deepen the education of all segments of the population, public libraries are to be established by political communities to provide educational, instructional and entertainment reading that has intrinsic value.⁵⁰ – This is what the first Library Act of 1919 says. It shows that the founders of our modern statehood were well aware not only of the importance of an educated nation but also of the indispensable role of libraries. One hundred years later, we can say that the importance of libraries in the field of education has increased and, as then, a high level of education in a nation is a necessary condition for economic prosperity and quality of life in all its aspects. However, the fundamental shift from the past is the speed with which social and technological changes, in particular, have come about and to which it is necessary to respond. Education no longer ends with schooling in the first decades of life, but becomes a lifelong necessity for every individual, which must be constantly developed and promoted in every way. Libraries represent a unique complex infrastructure of informal lifelong and civic education in the Czech Republic.

Libraries motivate the general public for comprehensive personal development. Libraries play a key and natural role in the development of reading, information, media, and digital literacy⁵¹ and in promoting reading.⁵² At the same time, the traditional role of libraries has been adapted to the digital age.⁵³ The ability to work with information and digital technologies is a necessary condition for maintaining the educational level of an individual. These competences need to be continuously developed in order to meet the problems and challenges of the 4.0 society⁵⁴ in the context of European⁵⁵ and global trends⁵⁶, using a wide range of techniques, information tools and primary source.

The promotion of lifelong learning in the upcoming period is declared in a number of strategic documents: *It is important to promote lifelong learning (civic and professional) for the whole population, including the involvement of the 55+ and 65+ age groups in education. The vision of modern education is based on the principle of lifelong learning and aims to build an open environment that enables every individual to learn throughout life, without distinction and without barriers.⁵⁷*

Cooperation with libraries is essential for formal, i.e., school education from pre-school to tertiary level,⁵⁸ including vocational education. Functional cooperation with libraries enables schools to benefit significantly from library services and the information resources they manage. The role of libraries in science and research cannot be overlooked.

⁵⁰ [Zákon č. 430/1919 Sb., o veřejných knihovnách obecních a navazujících předpisy](#)

⁵¹ MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ, MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY, [Hlavní směry vzdělávací politiky ČR 2030+](#)

⁵² ČESKÁ ŠKOLNÍ INSPEKCE, [Mezinárodní šetření PISA 2018: Národní zpráva](#)

⁵³ IFLA, [Global Vision Report Summary: Top 10 Highlights and Opportunities](#)

⁵⁴ DZURILLA Vladimír, OČKO Petr a kol., [Digitální ekonomika a společnost](#)

⁵⁵ EVROPSKÁ KOMISE, [Bílá kniha o budoucnosti Evropy: Úvahy a scénáře pro EU27 v roce 2025](#)

⁵⁶ MINISTERSTVO PRO MÍSTNÍ ROZVOJ, [Národní koncepce realizace politiky soudržnosti v ČR po roce 2020](#)

⁵⁷ dtto

⁵⁸ PILLEROVÁ a kol., [Současný stav spolupráce ve vzdělávání mezi veřejnými knihovnami a školami](#)

1. Vision 2030

Society perceives and uses libraries as indispensable institutions of informal lifelong and civic education, providing support to anyone who wants to develop their professional and civic competences.

Educational programmes offered by libraries are based on a clear dramaturgy based on knowledge of the needs of each target group and regular evaluation. Libraries maintain a network of cooperating institutions and partners to implement the programmes.

Libraries are the institution of first choice in strengthening the competences and developing the literacy of society, especially in the field of promoting reading and working with information. They provide a functional range of practical training programmes tailored to individual target groups across a wide socio-demographic spectrum.

Libraries are an important partner of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Regional Development. Comprehensive and systematic development of information literacy to address educational needs and everyday tasks is a compulsory part of the school curriculum at all levels. Functional partnership between librarians and teachers in the use of libraries of different types in the educational process is a matter of course. Libraries do not only focus on areas of literacy and literature but offer educational opportunities in the curriculum across all disciplines outlined in the Framework Education Programme.

2. Strategies for 2021 – 2027

Proposition

1. Libraries systematically strengthen their educational role in their conditions of operation. Their programme offer is guided by a clearly defined dramaturgy. They systematically identify and evaluate the needs of target groups, monitor new lifelong learning topics, especially in the field of innovative technologies and their impact on everyday life and sustainable development, and proactively offer these topics to the public. Libraries connect local educational actors and promote synergistic use of available resources.
2. Libraries are a functional link in the implementation of relevant inter-ministerial strategies. They figure prominently in the curriculum documents of the Ministry of Education and Science, namely in the Framework Educational Programmes, as actors in linking formal and non-formal education both in the development of competences and literacy and in the elimination of inequalities in the educational conditions of pupils and students. Libraries are responsible for the systematic **development of competences related to the search, evaluation and use of information** across a broad socio-demographic spectrum. Libraries navigate users in a globalised, highly opaque information and media environment.
3. **Libraries systematically develop their competences in informal civic and lifelong learning of users.** To do so, they are adapting not only staffing but also professional training. The Czech Republic National Library, regional libraries and libraries entrusted with regional functions provide methodological and other support for this process, directed at all types of libraries.
4. Libraries **support educational institutions** by providing **access to scientific resources** and offer **room** for different learning styles and innovative teaching methods.
5. **University** and research libraries (especially those with research organisation status) systematically **develop their knowledge of scholarly communication processes and tools.**
6. **University** and research libraries, based on their knowledge of the community's information needs and **in collaboration with teachers, systematically build critical work with scholarly information** into existing curricula.
7. **Researchers** collaborate with university and research libraries in the **search, processing and sharing of information, knowledge, and data**, and the visibility and presentation of scholarly outputs.

Strategic goals

1. Libraries, provide quality educational events for their target groups, including users with special needs
2. Create the necessary conditions for effective cooperation of libraries with schools of all levels and other educational institutions and state administration bodies at the level of inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture
3. Cooperate systematically with relevant schools in the localities served
4. Establish positions of education specialists in libraries
5. State and regions to support the role of libraries as educational institutions and to ensure its implementation in a systematic way
6. Provide multi-source funding for the educational function of libraries
7. Explicitly anchor the use of educational offerings and information resources of libraries of all types of memory institutions as a functional content component of teaching across educational areas and disciplines in curriculum documents of kindergartens, primary, secondary, and higher vocational schools, and educational institutions
8. Develop critical work with scientific information in the curricula, especially through the information available on the results of global science. Acquire results in the form of key electronic information resources, citation databases and bibliometric tools in a centralized manner. At the same time, libraries are a vital component in ensuring the quality of related activities of universities, as well as of educational activities themselves, with the increasing demand and requirements for distance learning
9. Cooperate with the commercial sector, support open solutions, technology transfer and innovation in relation to e.g., the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in the Czech Republic
10. Build an effective system of librarian education, including library management

III. Libraries as guardians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth

The identity of a society is not only based on economic or political success, but also on maintaining the cultural identity and self-esteem of a democratic society. Cultural and knowledge-based wealth is not only a legacy of the past, but a living and important part of our lives, open to fresh creative acts. The role of libraries is to manage, protect and make this wealth accessible, but also to actively encourage and support the creation of new values and knowledge.

Libraries are one of the pillars of our cultural continuity and identity. They are an indispensable basis for research, development, and education in all its forms. Thanks to their openness and wealth of knowledge and information, they support a wide range of other activities that enrich everyday life and meet the leisure and intellectual needs of citizens.

The traditional mission of libraries is to ensure the permanent preservation and accessibility of library collections, which form an integral part of our cultural heritage and wealth of knowledge. This not only includes physical documents such as books and newspapers and other holdings represented in libraries (map collections, prints, posters, postcards, audio documents), but also a significantly growing volume of digital collections. This is not only content created by digitising physical documents, but also documents created electronically (e-born documents) in the broadest possible sense.

The changing world of digital media places new demands on libraries in terms of long-term preservation and accessibility for future generations. Libraries play the role of curators who purposefully search through virtual space for values to process and preserve for future use, regardless of the effects of time and changing technology.

Today's libraries stimulate and support the creation of new cultural values and knowledge. These are created either by using the wealth of knowledge stored in libraries or as an immediate output of the activity of its creator, researcher, etc. Libraries provide access to knowledge wealth regardless of the time of its creation or its current form. In this way, they are actively involved in the process of creating new knowledge and innovation. An important role is played by the librarian, who together with the user, using all available resources, seeks answers to the questions we ask.

Libraries directly support the creation of new cultural values and knowledge by offering services that enable the creation of their own content, whether it is text, music, video, code, an object, or a simple idea. Sharing knowledge and creative energy through people meeting people and transferring knowledge and skills is an important part of this.

Libraries are also part of the Czech literary and literary-scientific life and purposefully support literature and its authors by running literary centres, reading clubs and meetings. They are committed to the development of reading among all ages and to increasing the literary and digital literacy of the population.

A dense network of libraries offers access to cultural and knowledge wealth to all, regardless of place and time. It is also an opportunity for active cooperation between memory institutions and the various actors of the creative industry.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ [Kapitola 1.6. Kultura Strategického rámce: Česká republika 2030](#)

1. Vision 2030

Libraries maintain the continuity of human knowledge, promote creativity and active leisure.

Libraries know the needs of society and reflect them in their services. Everyone has access to library services regardless of their differences.

Libraries preserve a significant part of our cultural and knowledge wealth over the long term, regardless of the form or time of its creation. They make it accessible by sharing it in a simple and user-friendly way through a functional library network using modern technologies. Libraries create linked data using all documents available at the time.

Libraries stimulate and support the creation of new cultural values by providing information, space, and facilities, but also by directly collaborating and connecting creators with the public. To do this, libraries provide welcoming and accessible facilities in which competent employees provide services to the public. These facilities are used for cultural events, offering the opportunity to create one's own works or to be inspired by the cultural wealth already created.

2. Strategies for 2021 – 2027

Proposition

1. Libraries offer **an open and secure physical and virtual room** for the creation and consumption of cultural and knowledge content.
2. Libraries are **hybrid institutions**, still processing traditional documents, but also focusing on content created digitally and directly in electronic form. Libraries are involved in the development and implementation of **new technologies**.
3. Libraries **guarantee** the long-term **preservation** of cultural heritage **and the authenticity** of information, regardless of the transience of its source.
4. Libraries systematically identify, evaluate, and respond to the **needs and attitudes of target user groups**.
5. Libraries are **staffed by people who are educated, creative** and who are not afraid to put their ideas into practice. Libraries innovate job roles based on new tasks.
6. Libraries **make effective use of the library network infrastructure** and other memory institutions to share all forms of content so that cultural and knowledge values are accessible to users in a simple, fast, and user-friendly way.

Strategic goals

1. Ensure equal access to all citizens with regard to information and resources, and the availability of library services
2. Collect, preserve in the long-term, and in a user-friendly way make the significant component of cultural and scientific heritage accessible in analogue and digital form through libraries
3. Share library data free of charge in open data systems and systematically link them in a digital environment
4. Maximise the cost-effectiveness of library services through consistent cooperation and sharing of activities
5. Build a cooperative system of cooperating institutions for depository storage
6. Stabilise and/or digitise documents at risk of physical degradation
7. Build multifunctional spaces for libraries operating in municipalities, with the necessary equipment to serve the public for creative leisure activities
8. Equip libraries with the latest technologies to enable users to access information and contemporary cultural forms quickly, safely, and enjoyably on a wide scale
9. Build a new building for the Czech Republic National Library, a new depository for the Moravian Regional Library and new buildings for the Moravian-Silesian Scientific Library and the Scientific Library in Olomouc
10. Prepare libraries for crisis situations threatening life, health, property, the environment or internal security and public order

**Libraries development concept
in the Czech Republic between
the years 2021-2027
with a prospect to 2030**

PILLAR I	PILLAR II	PILLAR III
Libraries as pillars of civil society development and natural centres of communities	Libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions	Libraries as custodians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth
Strategic goals by pillars		
Equal access to information resources and availability of services to all	Quality educational events for target groups, including users with specific needs	Equal access to information and resources and availability of services to all
Develop the potential of community centres	Conditions for elective cooperation of libraries with schools at all levels and other educational institutions and public authorities	Collect, preserve and make accessible cultural and scientific heritage in analogue and digital form
Respond actively to the diverse needs of users	Systematically collaborate with schools in the areas served	Share library data in open data systems and link them in a digital environment
Support the development of regional identity	Occupations for education specialist	Economic efficiency of services through cooperation and sharing of activities
Include libraries as community centres in strategic materials	Promote the role of libraries as educational institutions	cooperative system for depository storage
Provide for community functions through multi-source funding	Multi-source funding for the educational function of libraries	Stabilise and/or digitise documents at risk of physical degradation
Spatial, technological, and material facilities for the development of community activities, including support for competent employee development	Embed the use of the educational offer and information resources of libraries as part of the curriculum in schools	Multifunctional spaces with the necessary equipment for libraries in municipalities
Connection to high-speed internet	Develop critical engagement with scientific information in the curriculum through the availability of information on the results of global science	Equip libraries with the latest technologies for fast, safe, and enjoyable access to information and contemporary cultural forms
Integrate courses and methods that develop competences for community functions into the training of librarians	Promote open solutions, technology transfer and innovation	New building of the Czech Republic National Library, new depository of the Moravian Regional Library and new buildings of the Moravian-Silesian Scientific Library and the Scientific Library in Olomouc
	Effective system of librarian training, including management	Prepare libraries for crisis situations

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