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UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GERMANY IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Summary

The aim of the present work is to present university libraries in Germany in the context of the country's library policy. It requires discussing their organisation, structure and functioning in the systemic as well as dynamic perspective, related to the time and the process of transformations which have been taking place since the reunification of Germany in 1990 (*Deutsche Wiedervereinigung*) until the present time (2016). The last quarter of the century has been above all the period of the modernisation of university libraries in the changing world of the modern science and digital technologies. In order to understand it, both constant moments, related to the tradition of German librarianship and decisive for its continuity, and moments of change should be presented, as the latter show the modernising momentum manifesting itself in the consistently implemented projects which adapt libraries for the challenges of pursuing science "without paper" (in German: *papierlose Wissenschaft*).

The work is composed of five chapters. Together, they are to provide an answer to the main research problem: do the tasks performed by libraries today allow them to preserve the position of important and central units of their universities? This position, in most general terms, is expressed by the metaphor of the library as "the heart of the university" (German: *die Bibliothek ist das Herz der Universiät*). Chapter One includes a general panorama, or the so-called mapping, of the most important scientific libraries in Germany, and explains their interrelations. It is only in this context that the position and the significance of a group of university libraries can be shown. This part of the work also includes a discussion of the historical process of including the libraries of the former German Democratic Republic into the library structures and systems of the Western Germany after 1990. Chapter Two begins with a short introduction to the organisation of science and higher education in Germany. Its subsequent part is devoted to the political and legal foundations of university library systems, which allow them to be treated as integral elements of scientific and research infrastructure. The priorities of the library policy of the country are determined by central institutions (the Scientific Council, the German Research Foundation, the German Rectors' Conference, the Joint Science Conference of Federations and Lands, and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs), which work for the uniformity of the educational system in face of a sort of a dualism of power – the federal government and the

governments of particular lands (Bund – Länder). Their influence consists in determining the direction of the development of libraries in the national perspective; in funding them, evaluating their performance and indicating what sort of changes are expected of them by universities and research institutions. Chapter Three presents examples of specific projects realised together by libraries in terms of collecting, describing, digitalising and making the collections available to users. It is assumed that cooperation, made possible thanks to working via the Internet and exchanging data, is the overarching principle of their functioning. Chapter Four includes the presentation and analysis of the activities of selected libraries (case studies) as effective organisations which change their structure in order to develop services which fit the current needs of their users. It discusses, among others, the ideas of management based on quality indicators, adopted from standard models used in business economics, such as *Balanced Scorecard* and quality management system (German: *Qualitätsmanagementsystem*). Moreover, the chapter tackles the question of the transformation of the professional profile of scientific librarians (German: *Fachreferenten*), whose responsibility in modern-day libraries is to create websites offering information services, grouped by areas of knowledge, and to educate users in terms of information competence. One issue discussed in broader terms is the function of collecting in hybrid libraries, especially taking into account its economic aspect and the new methods of developing digital contents. Chapter Five presents current library topics, four of which have been selected as the most broadly discussed nowadays: Open Access, electronic publishing, research data as well as archiving and long-term availability of digital data. These are to be the decisive factors for changes in libraries in the nearest future which the libraries must face in order not to be excluded from the process of mediation in transferring knowledge and information.