

The Castle of Light: the New National Library of Latvia

Andris Vilks

Abstract

National Library is the largest library of the Republic of Latvia, yet nowadays Latvia is the last remaining European country without a purpose-built national library building. The construction works of the new building of the National Library of Latvia (The Castle of Light) were started in 2008 and by the end of 2013 the construction of the new building is expected to be completed. The key characteristics of the new NLL building are flexibility, light and place. The new NLL project simultaneously involves a new building in the city centre, a repository 25 km away from Riga, and the National Digital Library and State Unified Library Information Network – “Lightnet”, which electronically links all libraries in Latvia. The new NLL building was designed by internationally acclaimed Latvian-born American architect Gunnar Birkerts, who has a deep understanding of the essence, tasks and necessities of a library building. The Castle of Light is also a metaphor for wisdom that has been lost, but will someday rise again from the depths of the River Daugava. The NLL will be a so-called hybrid library where analogue and electronic information will compliment one another. The cooperation agreement between the National Central Library in Taipei and the NLL will enhance the collections for the AsiaRes. The NLL believes that the new library building will be an attractive tourist destination, and the Castle of Light will be all encompassing

Keywords: Castle of Light; Lightnet; Lighthouse; AsiaRes

Andris Vilks: Director, The National Library of Latvia; E-mail: andris.vilks@lnb.lv

in its research possibilities, including material on the culture of East Asia.

1. History and context

The Republic of Latvia, established in 1918, is a member state of the European Union. It has close historical, political, economical and cultural relations with Germany, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Estonia and Russia. With a population of slightly over 2 million, 60% of its population are ethnic Latvians; the other 40% is made up of Russians, Belarusians, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Estonians, Jews, Tatars, and others. The capital and largest city of Latvia is Riga with about 700,000 inhabitants, other major cities are Daugavpils and Liepāja ^[1]. The first book issued in Latvian was in 1525 ^[2]; a year after the first public library was established ^[3]. The first printing-house was set up in Riga in 1588 by the Dutch, Antwerp-based, typographer Nicolaus Mollinus ^[4]. In 1632 the first University in the area was opened in Tartu, in the Estonian territory ^[5]. The oldest institution of higher education in Latvia is the Riga Polytechnic, which was founded in 1862 ^[6]. Latvia has one National Library, 50 academic libraries, 38 specialized and 819 public libraries, including the 8 branches of the Latvian Library for the Blind, and 876 libraries associated with institutions of general and vocational education ^[7]. The State and a Bill and Melinda Gates foundation grant of around 40

Andris Vilks : Director ; E-mail : andris.vilks@lnb.lv

^[1] Latvian Institute 2012, *Latvia in Brief*, Latvian Institute, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.latvia.lv/library/latvia-brief>>G

^[2] Apīnis, A. *Grāmatniecības vēsture un grāmatzinātne*. Riga : P. Stučkas Latvijas valsts universitāte, 1976

^[3] Academic Library of the University of Latvia 2007, *History*, Academic Library of the University of Latvia, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.acadlib.lv/index.php?&65>>

^[4] Zanders, O. *Tipogrāfs Mollīns un viņa laiks : pirmās Rīgā iespiestās grāmatas, 1588-1625*. Riga : Zinātne, 1988.

^[5] Stradiņš, Jānis. „Tērbatas universitāte Latvijas zinātnes un kultūras kontekstā.” *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 18 February 2003. Accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.lettonia.lv/?lapa=publik&id=18>>

^[6] Riga Technical University 2010, *Riga Polytechnicum*, Riga Technical University, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.rtu.lv/en/content/view/1464/1168/lang,en/>>

^[7] LNB BAI Bibliotēku konsultatīvais centrs 2012, *Latvijas bibliotēku darba koprādītāji 2008-2011*, Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://tinyurl.com/cf48u2k>>

million dollars have supported the modernization of the entire public library network ^[8]. As a result all residents of Latvia can enjoy the latest information technology and free Internet access in the libraries, Latvia has the world's 5th fastest Internet connection with an average upload speed of 18.63 Mbps ^[9].

The National Library of Latvia (NLL) is the largest in the country – a universal research library, which serves as the legal deposit, maintains the national bibliography and forms the central hub of library development in the State level. Yet Latvia is the last remaining European country without a purpose-built national library building. Currently the NLL is located in six separate buildings of poor technical state, none of which are suited to its specific needs.

The NLL was established on August 29th, 1919. In 1920 the library began its legal deposit duties, procuring every publication published in Latvia. The NLL created and maintained the National Bibliographic Data System, linked up various private libraries of historical importance that remained without owners, regularly purchased books and took part in the international book exchange. In its mode of professional conduct the NLL followed Anglo-American traditions. By the end of 1930s the NLL collection contained more than 1 million volumes ^[10].

During the German and Soviet occupations (1940-1945) the NLL lost many valuable collected works, as well as its legal status and many of its functions. Whilst the total space increased, the different allocated premises were unsuitable for library work. Throughout the totalitarian regime, the Library managed to continue important research on special collections, publishing of national bibliographies and its cooperation with the Latvian public library network, as well as in encouraging professional scientific research ^[11].

^[8] State Agency Kultūras informācijas sistēmas 2008, *Public library development Project*, Trešais tēva dēls, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.3td.lv/index.php/en/par/apraksts/>>

^[9] Ookla 2012, *Household Upload Index*, Net Index by Ookla, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.netindex.com/upload/>>

^[10] Vilks, Andris. „Ceļā uz laikmetīgu Latvijas Nacionālo bibliotēku.” *Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas Zinātniskie raksti*, 2009. Accessed 28 February 2013, <http://academia.lndb.lv/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/866/latvijas_nacionalas_bibliotekas_zinatniskie_raksti_2009.pdf>

^[11] Štrāle, Aina. „Latvijas PSR Valsts bibliotēka pirmajā: 1940-1941 padomju okupācijas gadā.” *Latvijas*

In 1988 a gradual restoration of Latvian independence began that facilitated the opening of forbidden materials, the renewal of international cooperation and connections, and a rapid acquisition of foreign literature. All basic functions of the National Library were restored, and transition to the automated information systems began ^[12]. The NLL has become the backbone of the State Unified Library Information Network and in 1999 the implementation of the National Digital Library project was started ^[13].

The NLL as a universal research library has many functions that have had to evolve parallel to the requirements and necessities of the modern citizen. The Library's main roles, according to the "NLL Strategy 2013-2015" ^[14] are:

- Providing access to all analogue and digital publications in Latvia, Latvian and about Latvia, its people and Latvians around the world;
- Collecting and promoting national documentary heritage – sheet music, sound recordings, audiovisual materials, maps, pictures, photos, manuscripts;
- Providing access to the foreign information resources that are essential for the Latvian culture, education, science, economy and other needs;
- Ensuring data organization and quality control on a national level, the maintenance of the "Electronic Union Catalog of Latvian libraries of national significance" and its statistics;
- Via organizing exhibitions, trainings, seminars and other events (cultural, literary, educational, scientific, etc.) it creates a marketing policy for better access and usability of information resources;
- Ensuring preservation (long-term availability) of analogue and digital resources;
- Cooperating with libraries, museums, archives and other institutions on a

Nacionālās bibliotēkas Zinātniskie raksti, 2009. Accessed 28 February 2013, <http://academia.lndb.lv/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/866/latvijas_nacionalas_bibliotekas_zinatniskie_raksti_2009.pdf>

^[12] Dukure, Ilona. „Nacionālā analītiskā bibliogrāfija Latvijā pēc neatkarības atjaunošanas (1990-2009).” *Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas Zinātniskie raksti*, 2009. Accessed 28 February 2013, <http://academia.lndb.lv/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/866/latvijas_nacionalas_bibliotekas_zinatniskie_raksti_2009.pdf>

^[13] Bibliotēku informācijas tīklu konsorcijs 2001, *Valsts Vienotā Bibliotēku Informācijas Sistēma*, Latvijas Akadēmisko bibliotēku asociācija, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.lataba.lv/public/files/VVBIS%20konceptija.pdf>>

^[14] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka. *LNB stratēģija 2013-2015*. Rīga : Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, 2012.

national and international level – to ensure professional continuing education, the coordination of international programmes and projects, and serving as the national centre of digitalization.

2. The new National Library of Latvia project

The new NLL project (see Diagram 1) simultaneously involves a new building in the city centre, a repository 25 km away from Riga, and the National Digital Library and State Unified Library Information Network – “Lightnet”, which electronically links all libraries in Latvia.

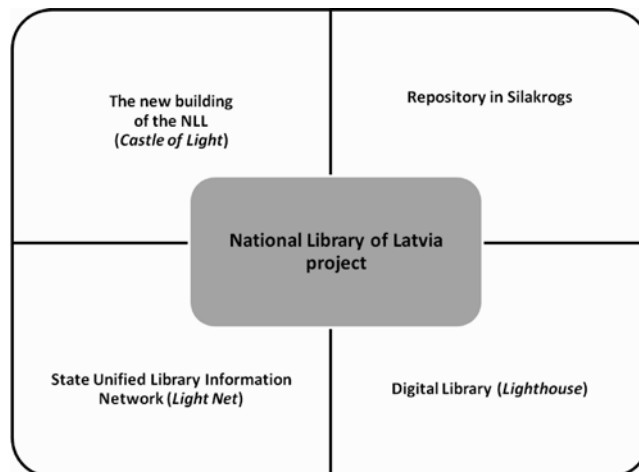


Diagram 1. New NLL project

City architects have a vision of the development of central Riga for the next 10-20 years (see Image 1). Currently Riga is divided into six administrative regions, its Central District (total area 3 km²), includes the historical centre of Riga or “Old Riga”^[15], which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site^[16]. The new building of the NLL is located on the left bank of the Daugava River with a view of the historical centre of

^[15] Riga municipality 2011, *Riga in Figures*, Riga municipality portal, accessed 28 February 2013, <https://www.riga.lv/EN/Channels/About_Riga/Riga_in_numbers/default.htm>

^[16] UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2013, *Historic Centre of Riga*, UNESCO, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/852>>

Riga across the water. This part of Riga is still in its process of development, with the City Architects envisioning to move the City Hall, University campus, the International Bus Terminal and other institutions to this side of the city.



Image 1. Location of the Library in the context of the historical centre of Riga

The new NLL building was designed by internationally acclaimed Latvian-born American architect Gunnar Birkerts^[17], who has a deep understanding of the essence, tasks and necessities of a library building. He has thus created an expressive form and a highly functioning body (see Image 2).



Image 2. The new building of the NLL in December 2012

^[17] Michigan Modern, *Gunnar Birkerts*, Michigan Modern, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://michiganmodern.org/architects-designers-firms/architects/gunnar-birkerts/>>

The new NLL building is one of the most complex objects to be constructed in independent Latvia, it presented a challenge both to the builders as well as the library professionals in attaining the requirements of a model 21st century library.

The first discussions on a new NLL building began back in 1926-1928. They continued before and after the Second World War, and came close to realization in the 1960s-70s when the present site was selected and the first sketches materialised. In 1989, after active public pressure, architect Gunnar Birkerts was selected, and the project commenced. However the commencement was gradual, as even though the National Library of Latvia Foundation was formed and UNESCO support was gained in the late 1990s, the decision to build the new library was officially reached in 2002, and construction works only began in 2008. With the recent ridgepole celebration in 2011 ^[18], the construction of the *Castle of Light* will be completed on May 3rd 2013 ^[19]; infrastructure development works, furnishing and equipping will continue throughout the year, for the NLL to officially open its doors in 2014.

2014 is special aside from the Library opening, as Riga will be the European Capital of Culture ^[20], and the NLL will present some major cultural events – an exhibition „The Book 1514-2014” and an International Conference “The Content of the 21st Century”. In 2014 the NLL will also host the LIBER Annual Conference, and in 2015 the *Castle of Light* will be the central location for the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union ^[21] events. Even before its completion the new building has partaken as an art object in the festival of light “Staro Rīga” (see Image 3) ^[22]. It will also be a tourist destination contributing highly to Riga’s attractiveness.

^[18] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *LNB vēstures fakti*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.lnb.lv/lv/par-instituciju/lnb-vestures-fakti>>

^[19] Latvijas Republika 2003, *Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas projekta īstenošanas likums*, Tieslietu ministrija, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=75138>>

^[20] “Rīga 2014” 2013, *Programme*, Rīga 2014, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://riga2014.org/en/kategorija/kas-notiks/>>

^[21] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2013, *Secretariat of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/2012/may/secretariat/>>

^[22] Staro Rīga 2012, *Installations*, Staro Rīga, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.staroriga.lv/en/>>



Image 3. NLL as the object in the festival of light

The intention for the building is expressiveness. Its appearance includes metaphors and references to the most important images of Latvian folk legends and folk songs – the glass mountain, the symbolic Castle of Light. It symbolizes the height of achievement – difficult to attain, yet full of rewards for those who make the commitment to reach its peak. The *Castle of Light* is also a metaphor for wisdom that has been lost, but will someday rise again from the depths of the River Daugava, after the Latvian people have overcome the intellectual darkness of war, invasion and occupation. Gunnar Birkerts intentionally incorporated these evocative Latvian symbols in his design. Located on the left bank of the legendary River Daugava, its glassy slopes will mirror the spires that shape the distinctive silhouette of Old Riga.

The key characteristics of the new NLL building are flexibility, light and place. National libraries initially were closed repositories, intended for eternal preservation of tangible materials. Now national libraries are becoming flexible and freely accessible to everyone. The *Castle of Light* is a literary metaphor, known to all Latvians, and the building implicates a direct connection of the metaphoric meaning to the technical demands of the library. Books should be isolated from sunlight, but readers and staff should have daylight whenever possible. Light is one of Gunnar Birkerts' favourite "raw materials"; he designed the atrium as a tool for spreading daylight throughout the library. A library is a place where people meet. The open, communicative philosophy of libraries of the recent decades has been emphasized in their new constructions. With

new circumstances - libraries take on new dimensions. Working closely with NLL experts, Gunnar Birkerts designed an infrastructure that is both a striking architectural symbol for Latvia and a state-of-the-art, multi-functional structure that meets the needs of a modern information based society.

The *Castle of Light* will never be a motionless structure; it will feature large and small-scale exhibitions, film screenings, book presentations, authors' lectures, different conferences and workshops, happenings and more (see Image 4). It will be a platform for the development of knowledge, where ideas are born and take shape. The project creators are



Image 4. Making music video of Latvian rap singer Gacho at the NLL. Latvian hacker Neo (on the left) Gacho (on the right)

certain that the NLL will be a space for art and creation, as well as for networking. A future favourite meeting spot, as the NLL is not simply a building, but a repository of knowledge where information can be stored, protected and shared. The Castle of Light is both a structure and a symbol of human knowledge, which it contains and reveres.

3. General project overview

- The new NLL building is one of the most significant projects of the 21st century in Latvia. This project gives the NLL an opportunity to become a modern information and cultural centre of international importance.
- The NLL collections, data, services and support of the regional libraries will reach all people in Latvia.
- The NLL project includes construction of the new building and establishment of the State Unified Library Information Network *Lightnet*, which provides other libraries in Latvia remote access to the NLL digital content.

- The architect of the new NLL building design is Latvian born American architect Gunnar Birkerts. He developed his project in collaboration with prominent Latvian architect Modris Ģelzis.
- Construction works are made by the National Construction Work Association, which consists of three major Latvian construction companies: „Re & Re” Ltd., „RBSSKALS” JSC and “Skonto Buve” Ltd.
- The NLL is a State financed direct administration institution, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. The NLL project contractor is the Ministry of Culture.
- Total costs of construction (excluding infrastructure, library furniture and equipment, and other project charges) = 114.6 million LVL (163 million EUR).
- The construction primarily used local construction materials, such as reinforced concrete, mortar, plate glass, etc.
- The live feed of construction has been available online throughout: www.nba.lv and www.gaisma.lv



Image 5. CGI of the soon to be realized Castle of Light

4. Main facts

- 1000 reading places
- Serving over 3,000 visitors a day

- Free access to 350 000 publications
- Concert hall and conference space seating 380
- Mezzanine level open 24/7
- Space for 6 million books, journals and other printed materials
- 10 group study rooms (for 6-16 people)
- Individual study rooms
- Museum of Latvian Book History
- Exhibitions of rare books and manuscripts
- Conference centre and seminar space (accommodating up to a 100 people)
- Music room, Story room, language courses
- Exhibitions, public discussions, presentations, artist talks
- Staff: 400
- 13 Levels (including the basement)
- Construction: monolithic reinforced concrete building, covered with glass panels and stainless steel sheets
- Overall area: 40 455 m²
- Built up area: 8 590 m²
- Height: 68m
- Cubic area: 263 000 m³
- Air change rate: twice an hour
- Library accessibility: all services available for people with limited mobility, with specially equipped work stations for the visually impaired

5. Information on the different levels

Basement

Conference centre

Technical facilities

Level 1

Large vestibule

Museum of Latvian Book History

Exhibition halls
Concert hall and conference space
Library shop
Computer/ Internet stations
Cafe

Mezzanine Level

Information desk
Current Periodicals; Reading Room

Level 2

Social science and Humanities; Reading Room and Collection Storage

Level 3

Technology and Natural Sciences Reading Room
Periodicals; Reading Room and Collection Storage

Level 4

Art Centre (Music, Visual Arts Reading Rooms)
Audiovisual Centre
Multimedia; Collection Storage

Level 5

Letonika and Baltic Centre
Rare Books and Manuscripts; Reading Room and Collection Storage
Latvian folklore Storage “Dainu skapis” (“The Cabinet of Dainas” – Latvian folk songs)

Level 6

Cartographic Publications; Reading Room and Collection Storage
Small Prints and Art Editions; Viewing Room

Level 7

Children’s Literature Centre and Collection Storage

Level 8

Library Studies and Information Sciences; Reading Room and Collection Storage

Level 9

Collection Storage

Level 10

Technical Space

Level 11, 12Public Event Spaces ^[23]**6. The National Library of Latvia – hybrid library**

The NLL will be a so-called hybrid library where analogue and electronic information will compliment one another. The purpose of the National Digital Library is to ensure the availability of digitised Latvian cultural and historic heritage; it gives access to full text resources on history, geography, economy and politics, and presents a well-designed platform for thematic research.

The NLL began its digital preservation work of the national cultural heritage in 1999, and led a bulk digitization project in 2007. The project primarily focused on the digitization of newspapers and magazines, taking into account significance and high demand, as well as their poor physical condition. The NLL has digitized more than 4.5 million pages of newspapers and magazines; currently the greater part of periodicals in Latvian, German, Russian and other languages that were issued before the Second World War are available electronically ^[24]. The NLL has also digitized more than seven thousand Latvian monographs that have a particular importance due to their content, historical or artistic value ^[25]; a few hundred historic maps ^[26]; thousands of historic

^[23] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *Jaunā LNB ēka*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.lnb.lv/lv/jauna-lnb-eka>>

^[24] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *Periodika*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://periodika.lv/>>

^[25] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *Grāmatas*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://gramatas.lndb.lv/>>

^[26] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *Kartes*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://kartes.lnb.lv/>>

pictures: posters, postcards, engravings ^[27]. Over 25 thousand historic photos and post cards, reflecting Latvian people and places through different periods of time, stand as the highlight of the NLL digital collection. Called “In Search of the Lost Latvia” came out of a collaboration between the NLL and many Latvian memory institutions, local history researchers and historians ^[28]. The NLL is also involved in the preservation of digital heritage, with a special emphasis on web archiving. At the moment the NLL has collected a selection of more than 3000 websites ^[29].

From 2007 the NLL has been developing a platform of national importance for the preservation and access to the digital cultural heritage; the Digital Object Management System provides unique identification, ensures long-term preservation, descriptions and the public access to the digital cultural heritage, it serves as a point of data exchange between national and international partners. The NLL has developed various specialized systems for accessing the digital heritage, notably for periodicals and maps. Most of these systems have been released as open source software. Currently the NLL is developing a nationwide system for reusing cultural materials.

Aside from digital services the NLL will continue fulfilling its existing functions and will develop new services. Taking on a new role as an art centre that provides free access to visual arts and music, the library will develop its multimedia centre, making specialized image and sound processing programmes available to visitors; providing premises for group studies; offering a music room, exhibition gallery and audio recording studio, and more. Atypical to national libraries, the NLL will develop its services for kids. The NLL Children’s Literature Centre trains librarians who specialize in children’s and youth services. It implements reading encouragement programmes addressing urgent issues regarding reading competency, providing a platform for discussing read digital materials, animations, illustrator workshops, alphabet games, a

^[27] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2011, *Latvijas Nacionālā digitālā bibliotēka*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://www.lndb.lv>>

^[28] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2012, *Zudusī Latvija*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://zudusilatvija.lv/>>

^[29] Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2013, *WWW Arhīvs*, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, accessed 28 February 2013, <<http://webarhivs.lndb.lv/>>

“Storytellers chair”, a picture book theatre, interactive exhibitions, and more.

Table 1. comparison of the physical and digital services at the new NLL:

Physical	Digital
“One stop shop” a unified quick service point / directory centre	Electronic resources that employ a united interface in all reading rooms (online subscription databases)
Free access to the reference collection and the “Science for the Public” collection of 50 000 volumes	Electronic delivery of documents, “Ask a Librarian”, and live Librarian chat
Services for corporate clients	Access to the internet, free Wi-Fi
Reader assistance in information resource usage	Virtual exhibitions
24hr reading room	Access to digital collections
Free access to the wider library collection of 355,000 volumes	<i>Library in your pocket</i> – mobile access to digital content
Book and other material borrowing (online subscription, personal subscription)	Virtual Private Network
Individual and group reading rooms	
Availability of publications from international institutions and other special collections	
Exhibitions	

7. Cooperation with Taiwan

Taking note from the University of Latvia, which recently launched a series of successful oriental language study programs, and the successful cooperation in various educational and research projects (including long-term projects) between the University of Latvia and the NLL, the NLL is interested in furthering the cooperation with Taiwan. There has been a growing interest among Latvians in the East Asian region, also the economic and cultural bonds with the East Asian countries have been strengthening, as the role of these countries in the development of global economy has been rising. Due to lack of Baltic institutions that support research activities on the oriental culture and linguistic research, the “Library of the Baltic Research Centre for East Asian Studies (AsiaRes) in the new NLL building”^[30] project arose.

^[30] Baltic Research Centre for East Asian Studies 2013, *AsiaRes*, Baltic Research Centre for East Asian

The aim of the project is to:

- create and position a scientific library, the AsiaRes, in the new NLL premises with materials on history, culture, linguistics, sociology and economy - a collection that mostly contains information resources in oriental languages;
- promote development of cultural, economic and political relations between the Baltic States and East Asia.

The NLL will provide space and facilities in the new library building for the AsiaRes library collections. The NLL will also offer AsiaRes space for thematic exhibitions, language classes and other activities; enhance cooperation between the NLL, AsiaRes and the national libraries of East Asian countries. There is a cooperation agreement between the National Central Library in Taipei and the NLL.

AsiaRes library collections will be placed in the open shelves on the 3rd floor of the Castle of Light. These collections will be regularly supplemented with new editions in oriental and western languages. Acquisition will primarily be based on donations; the NLL will organize systematic educational programmes or events (exhibitions, thematic lectures, classes, workshops, and cultural events.) that promote East Asian culture and languages. All professional events will be organized in collaboration with the University of Latvia oriental experts. The University of Latvia will establish a permanent advisory board of experts to provide comprehensive support for the project implementation and enhancement of AsiaRes library publicity in Latvia and the other Baltic states.

8. Conclusion

The NLL believes that the new library building will be an attractive tourist destination, similarly to other national libraries, such as the National Library of Denmark (Copenhagen), the British Library (London), the National Library of France (Paris), the National Library of Estonia (Tallinn), the National Library of Belarus (Minsk), and others. The NLL will provide guided tours to all interested parties,

corporate clients and daily visitors alike. The opening of the Castle of Light in 2014 will enhance the appeal of not just Riga, but Latvia as well, as many visitors see Riga as a gateway to the country. Every resident of Latvia knows about the new NLL project, and already the Castle of Light is a national symbol. The multi-functional structure that meets the needs of a modern knowledge based society. The Castle of Light will be all encompassing in its research possibilities, including material on the culture of East Asia.

