

## Devedeset godina Nacionalne biblioteke Azerbejdžana

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## Ninety years of the Azerbaijan National Library

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**Abstract**

*A treasure trove of knowledge, the keeper of the cultural heritage Azerbaijan National Library today is the information centre of the republic, also it can be said headquarter of library science organizing, directing and developing science, education and culture. For many years the library is at the service of society, nurturing a generation of prominent scientists, writers, researchers, workers of science and art. Founded on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May in 1923 Azerbaijan National Library celebrates today its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. All this was a long way that library passed carefully preserving cultural values and innovative scientific knowledge. Great joy for the whole library community was the signing of the decree by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev on celebrating the 90 year anniversary of the library. The signing of the decree once again confirmed care and attention given by the head of state to the culture and particularly to the library science in the country. On the basis of this decree there were held range of anniversary ceremonies in the library on 23-25 of September 2013.*

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan National Library, 90 year anniversary

**Sažetak**

*Riznica znanja i čuvar kulturnog naslijeđa Nacionalna biblioteka Azerbejdžana danas je informacijski centar Republike, a može se reći i sjedište bibliotekarskih nauka iz kojeg se organizira, usmjerava i razvija nauka, obrazovanje i kultura. Godinama stojeći na raspolaganju cijeloj društvenoj zajednici, Biblioteka odgaja generacije istaknutih naučnika, pisaca, istraživača, djelatnika iz područja nauke i umjetnosti. Osnovana 23. maja 1923. godine, Nacionalna biblioteka Azerbejdžana danas slavi 90. rođendan. Bio je to dug put koji je Biblioteka prošla brižno čuvajući kulturne vrijednosti i inovativno naučno znanje.*

*Cijelu bibliotečku zajednicu posebno je obradovalo to što je dekret o proslavi 90. godišnjice Biblioteke potpisao Ilham Aliyev, predsjednik Republike Azerbejdžan. Potpisivanjem dekreta opet je potvrđena sva briga i pažnja koju rukovodstvo države posvećuje kulturi i posebno bibliotekskim naukama u zemlji. Na osnovu ovog dekreta u biblioteci je od 23. do 25. septembra 2013. održan niz manifestacija kojima je obilježena proslava godišnjice.*

**Ključne riječi:** Nacionalna biblioteka Azerbejdžana, devedeseta godišnjica

As part of the anniversary celebrations there were held 27<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the international organization of the Conference of European National Libraries (CENL), 15<sup>th</sup> general meeting of the Library Assembly of Eurasia (BAE) and opening of the III Baku International Book Fair in Baku. The anniversary was also marked by the official signing ceremony on mutual cooperation between Azerbaijan National Library and Presidential Library named after Boris Yeltsin and Azerbaijan National Library and the National Academic Library of Kazakhstan. Also there was held official opening ceremony of the department "Rare books and library museum" in Azerbaijan National Library.

In total the ceremony was attended by 60 foreign guests, directors of more than 35 national libraries of the world, the president and members of the CENL, the president and members of the BAE.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of September Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan Republic received Bruno Racine, president of the CENL, vice-presidents Marie Christine Doffey and Janne Andresoo, Gulisa Balabekova, vice-president of the BAE, Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic and Karim Tahirov, director of the Azerbaijan National Library.

The President stressed the importance of the next meeting of the CENL and BAE in Azerbaijan, participation representatives of the library society from different countries in such celebrations. The President also expressed his confidence that the discussion and constructive solution of many library issues

during conference will strengthen friendly international relations and development of the library sphere. At the same time the head of the republic said that current anniversary is a good cause to explore modern Azerbaijan and expressed hope that the guests will be pleased with their visit. Arriving for the first time in Azerbaijan president of the CENL Bruno Racine thanked President for the warm welcome, shared his impressions about capital of Azerbaijan – Baku and directly from the visit to the Azerbaijan National Library. Bruno Racine confirmed his indispensable part in the celebrations of the library, opening of the third Baku International Book Fair and said that holding meeting of CENL in Baku a significant event in the library world.

Gulisa Balabekova, vice-president of the BAE in her turn expressed deep gratitude to the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev for the warm welcome and hospitality.

Elchin Efendiyev, deputy prime minister, Abulfaz Garayev, minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic and other ministry officials, administration of the National Library, CENL and BAE, directors of leading Azerbaijani libraries, director of Centralized Library System as well as the entire library community participated in the inauguration of the III Baku International Book Fair on September 23, 2013. More than 15 national libraries of Europe demonstrated their highly valued exhibits at this fair. They caused great interest among the visitors.

125 publishing houses from 25 foreign countries, a number of big publishing houses, bookshops and printing enterprises of the republic attended at the exhibition and presented very interesting printed materials. Also books from the collection of the Azerbaijan National Library (Azerbaijani classical literature and world classics published in Latin alphabet by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev), other books from the collection of the National Library, as well as from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism were demonstrated at this exhibition. In total number of these books were more than 600 copies.

Afterwards opening ceremony in the conference hall of the library there was held closed meeting of CENL Management and Executive Committee and European Library members. Then guests got acquainted with the work of Azerbaijan National Library, with departments and a rich collection of library. After visit to the library guests attended a concert of the new Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. The concert was held with the participation of Azerbaijani and German musicians in the Azerbaijan State

Philharmonic within framework of Uzeyir Hajibayli Musical Festival.

Next day, 24<sup>th</sup> of September at the Park Inn “Dan ulduzu” hall was held the 27th Annual Meeting of CENL. It was attended by over 50 participants from 40 countries.

Just for reminder CENL Fund was founded in 1987 and its first meeting was held in Lisbon, with the participation of 11 European National Libraries. Currently CENL has 49 member libraries in 46 countries of Europe. Since 2003 Azerbaijan participates in the meetings of CENL as an observer and since 2005 as a full member regularly takes part in the annual meetings of the organization. The proposal to hold the next CENL meeting in Azerbaijan was first put forward by the National Library of Azerbaijan at the meeting in 2007 in Madrid. In 2010 CENL Executive Committee adopt a decision to hold a meeting in 2013 in Baku. On the basis of the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic dated 24 June, 2013 on “Celebration of 90 year anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Library” it was decided to hold the next meeting of CENL in Baku in September within framework of the anniversary celebrations of the library.

Abulfaz Garayev, minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic also attended at the meeting. He warmly welcomed guests at the event held in Azerbaijan - Land of Lights. Briefly but succinctly he spoke about the rich culture of the Azerbaijan Republic, the historical path she passed, about fourfold change of Azerbaijani alphabet within a century, mass publication of books on Latin by the decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic and spreading them out as a gift to the libraries in the regions. “After this event not only the national literature collection of library in the Latin alphabet was enriched, but also greatly increased the flow of readers to the library,” - said the Minister. He also touched a number of issues facing the Azerbaijani libraries, such as creation of a digital version of library collections, creation of an electronic catalog, exchange of bibliographic records and full automation of all library processes. “I am confident that this meeting of CENL, discussions of vital library problems will play a big role in the development of Azerbaijani libraries, create the conditions for the exchange of best practices of European countries and will open the way to national information resources to the international community” - said Abulfaz Garayev.

Director of the Azerbaijan National Library Karim Tahirov made speech at this ceremony. “I am ho-

noured to receive here, on Azerbaijani land participants of such a significant event. Organization of such international events has great importance not only for the National Library but also for the entire library community. Azerbaijan National Library expresses its readiness to hold follow-up meetings of CENL as well as actively to participate in any other projects of this organization.” - said Dr. Tahirov.

The next speaker, Bruno Racine, president of CENL welcomed participants and read out the questions on the agenda. After a brief report about last year's meeting in Vaduz he gave the word to the participants of the event.

In the following hours of the meeting representatives of national libraries made presentations on optimization of library activities and demonstrated their projects.

27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the CENL continued its work in the first half of the day in Park Inn Hotel on 25<sup>th</sup> of September. Representatives of the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, United Kingdom and other countries in their speeches touched on the theme of a new multilateral cooperation, new goals and development of library science sphere. During discussions was announced that election of the next president and Executive Committee members of CENL is delayed by 1.5 year. At the end of the meeting it was announced that next 28<sup>th</sup> CENL Annual Meeting will be held in Moscow. In this connection 5-minute film about the Russian State Library was demonstrated. It was decided to consider the proposal for holding meeting in 2017 in Turkey. At the end of the 27<sup>th</sup> annual meeting director of the Azerbaijan National Library Karim Tahirov proposed to hold 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of CENL in Azerbaijan. Thereon 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of CENL had finished.

At the National Library were signed bilateral Memorandums on Cooperation between Azerbaijan National Library and the Russian Presidential Library named after Boris Yeltsin and also with Azerbaijan National Library and the National Academic Library of Kazakhstan. After ceremony Alexander Vershinin, director of the Russian Presidential Library and Zhanna Shaymukhanbetova, deputy director of the National Academic Library of Kazakhstan talked about the prospects for the development of interlibrary relationships, the possibilities that are open to the libraries after the signing of the Memorandum. Guests attended the opening ceremony of the department “Rare books and museum library” of Azerbaijan National Library. They get acquainted with the

rarest and ancient books of the National Library and museum exhibits.

The guests also looked through exhibitions like “90 years on the service of the people” consisting of the books of Azerbaijan National Library, “25 +5 best designed Estonian books 2011-2012”, “Classics of World Literature”, “Karabakh - the cradle of our culture”, “Azerbaijan through foreign languages”.

After all there was the XV general meeting of the Library Assembly of Eurasia (BAE). The meeting was attended by Alexander Visly, president of BAE, director of the Russian State Library, Galina Raikova, director general, Karim Tahirov, director of the National Library of Azerbaijan, Anton Likhomanov, director of the National Library of Russia, Alexander Vershinin director of the Russian Presidential Library, Jyldyz Bakashova, director of the National Library of Kyrgyzstan, Zhanna Shamukhanbetova, deputy director of the National Academic Library of Kazakhstan, Tatyana Pavlusha, deputy director of the National Library of Ukraine, Tamara Vylegzhanina, deputy director of the National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine, Alexei Rau, director of the National Library of Moldova, Sharif Toshev, deputy director of the National Library of Tajikistan, Alishir Ishmatov, deputy director of the National Library of Uzbekistan etc.

In the evening, 25<sup>th</sup> of September all guests attended the ceremony dedicated to the 90 year anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Library. The event was held in Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre.

Elchin Efendiyev, Deputy Prime Minister, national writer had a declamation on a glorious 90 year history of the Azerbaijan National Library. Welcoming speeches were made by Abulfaz Garayev, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Bruno Racine, president of CENL, Alexander Visly, president of BAE, Karim Tahirov, director of the Azerbaijan National Library.

In connection with the 90 year anniversary of the National Library of Azerbaijan by the decree of President Ilham Aliyev on September 24, 2013 seven employees of the National Library of Azerbaijan was awarded the title “Honoured Worker of Culture”, six employees were awarded with medal of “Progress”. Director of the Azerbaijan National Library Karim Tahirov for his merits in development of library science in Azerbaijan was awarded with the Order “For Merit to the Motherland” of third class.

By order of the Minister of Culture and Tourism

of Azerbaijan Republic 8 library employees were awarded with the "Honorary Worker of Culture" badges, 17 employees were awarded with the diplomas of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and prizes. This is another welcome development in a series of celebrations.

The ceremony was attended by Vagif Aliyev, first Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism. In his speech deputy minister spoke of the enormous role of libraries in the preservation of cultural values and upbringing of the younger generation, productive activities of the National Library and the value given by Government to the librarians. The Deputy Minister congratulated the awardees, after which the ceremony of awarding had been held.

After the ceremony director of the library Karim Tahirov on its own behalf and on behalf of the entire library staff expressed his deepest gratitude to the President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev and Minister of Culture and Tourism Abulfaz Garayev for the appreciation of library work. "I 'm sure that library staff will continue to work with the same zeal, enthusiasm and love for their work", - said Karim Tahirov.

In honour of the 90 year anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Library on 25<sup>th</sup> of September in "Art Garden" restaurant there was held a reception. The reception was organized by Abulfaz Garayev, the Minister of Culture and Tourism. Along with the foreign guests in the ceremony there were officials of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, directors of the leading national libraries, directors of the Centralized Library System from regions, nearly entire library community and staff of the National Library.

Abulfaz Garayev, the Minister of Culture and Tourism made speech at the gala dinner and once again welcomed guests and sincerely wished them to have a splendid evening.

Karim Tahirov, director of the National Library expressed his profound gratitude to all the guests who took part in these celebrations.

All the guests who had speech once again congratulated staff of the Azerbaijan National Library with this glorious occasion and presented their gifts to the newly established library museum.

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