

ON THE BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MIROSLAV KRLEŽA INSTITUTE OF LEXICOGRAPHY AND THE ENCYCLOPAEDIC INSTITUTE OF THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

In the early autumn of 2024, the representatives of the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography (LZMK) and the Encyclopaedic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (EI SAS) signed an agreement on their mutual cooperation. However, this document was not the starting point of this cooperation; its beginning can be traced to 2017, when Dr Nataša Jermen, the Assistant Director for Research and Inter-Institutional Cooperation at the LZMK, found a mention of the EI SAS somewhere on the Internet and invited us to participate in their 6th International Conference, titled *The Future of Information Sciences (INFuture)*. Although we did not attend the conference due to lack of time, we sent a paper entitled *The e-Beliana Project*,¹ in which we described the analogue-to-digital journey of the written volumes of the *Slovak General Encyclopaedia Beliana*. Since then, we have been in contact and have often discussed our ways of preparing a general encyclopedia as well as various circumstances that influence our work. In the autumn of 2022, the Second European and North American Encyclopedia Conference was organised by the LZMK in Zagreb, giving us a great opportunity to meet members of the international encyclopedic community as well as the organisers of this excellent event. There, the international community took a further step towards broadening the cooperation of participants by founding the European Encyclopedia Network and electing Dr Bruno Kragić, Director General of the LZMK and Editor-in-Chief of the *Croatian Encyclopedia*, as its Chairman.

While the importance of international scientific cooperation is widely recognised, the need for international cooperation among encyclopedists is absolutely

¹ Tatiana Šrámková, Miloš Šrámek, Viera Tomová, »The e-Beliana Project«, in: I. Atanassova, W. Zaghouni, B. Kragić, K. Aas, H. Stančić, and S. Seljan (eds.), *6th International Conference: The Future of Information Sciences INFUTURE2017: Integrating ICT in Society*, Department of Information and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 2017, pp. 161–166. <https://doi.org/10.17234/INFUTURE.2017>

essential, as Dr Valters Ščerbinskis aptly explained in his article.² The main reason he gives for this is that ‘there are very few specialists in this field of producing knowledge for the widest possible audience’, which is especially true for small nations. That is why contacts and discussions with colleagues from abroad are so necessary.

The visit of Drs Nataša Jermen and Bruno Kragić to Bratislava on 19–21 November 2024 was the first working meeting held within the framework of the bilateral cooperation agreement. It had several objectives: firstly, to introduce the *Croatian Encyclopedia* and the LZMK to the EI SAS editorial team; secondly, to discuss problems that we have in common as well as new challenges for both *Encyclopedias*; and thirdly, to familiarise our colleagues from the *Croatian Encyclopedia* with the editorial and other IT systems used in the daily work at EI SAS.

At a meeting with the editorial staff of the EI SAS, Nataša Jermen presented basic information about the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, its history, mission, and achievements. It is the only Croatian institution dedicated to lexicography and encyclopedistics, as a professional activity and a scientific discipline within the field of information sciences in Croatia. So far, the Institute has published more than 400 volumes of encyclopedias, dictionaries, lexicons, bibliographies, and other editions, covering almost all fields of knowledge. The digitisation of this published content began in 2008 and has resulted in online-published digitised archival print editions. This was followed by publishing a continuously updated online general encyclopedia, and transformation of specialised encyclopedias into encyclopedic portals. The online content comprises approximately 400,000 open access encyclopedic articles from 30 editions.

The above steps differ from the digitisation and subsequent procedures for the published volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Beliana*, from which only revised, updated, or rewritten content is published online.

Bruno Kragić presented the *Croatian Encyclopedia*, a general encyclopedia in the Croatian language. Its 11 printed volumes, published between 1999 and 2009, have been available online since 2013. Its 71,500 articles are constantly updated and extended, and the portal receives new interfaces and functionalities. In comparison, the *Encyclopaedia Beliana* has around 20,000 articles online and the editorial team is currently preparing the 10th printed volume.

One new challenge for encyclopedias is the ever-improving artificial intelligence (AI). AI can be looked at from two perspectives: AI as a user of encyclopedia content and AI as an aid in creating encyclopedia content. What are the rights and obligations

² Valters Ščerbinskis, »Latvian nacionālā enciklopēdija visiting Hrvatska enciklopedija within the ERASMUS+ exchange programme«, *Studia lexicographica*, 17, 33, 2023, pp. 175–176.

in these cases? To answer such questions, we invited a lawyer, Dr Zuzana Adamová, an expert in intellectual property law and law in cyberspace,³ who gave a talk on artificial intelligence and its legal regulation and practice in Slovakia. She explained that the use of encyclopedia content, like any other content, is regulated in the EU by several directives. In general, any use of copyright-protected content requires the authorisation of the rightsholder concerned unless relevant copyright exceptions apply. Copyright exceptions for the use of copyrighted content by AI through text and data mining are set out in the Digital Single Market Copyright Directive (2019/790) and transposed within the Slovak Copyright Act. These exceptions permit the reproduction and extraction of works for text and data mining purposes, provided that specific conditions are met. Rightsholders may choose to reserve the rights over their works and prohibit text and data extraction, except for the purposes of scientific research. In instances where the rightsholders choose to reserve rights over their works, which must be done expressly in an appropriate manner, it is required to obtain authorisation from the rightsholders to perform text and data mining on such works.

The use of AI as a tool to speed up the production of encyclopedic articles was another topic. This is generally allowed, but raises both ethical and practical issues. There is no legal requirement to mention the use of AI for text generation, but it is considered good practice. It is also advisable to read the terms and conditions of use of the specific AI system. When using AI, there is no rightsholder (no physical person is present), so the result cannot be protected by Slovak copyright law.

During the visit of our colleagues, we discussed the specific possibilities of our cooperation, one of which is through sharing software. The EI SAS uses its own software, which is developed under the Gnu General Public License (Gnu GPL) and can therefore be freely shared. We demonstrated to our Croatian colleagues the IT systems that are used on a daily basis at the Encyclopaedic Institute, both in the production of the *Encyclopaedia Beliana* and in related support activities. Of particular interest was our discussion about the European Encyclopedia Network (EEN), the possibilities of improving the EEN website and using it as a platform for the exchange of up-to-date information, plans for future bilateral meetings and seminars, etc. The last item on the agenda of the visit was a tour of the Old Town of Bratislava.

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³ Zuzana Adamová, Ivan Petkov, Michal Čerňanský, »Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in Slovakia«, in F. Petillion (ed.), *Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in the EU Member States*, Cambridge–Antwerp, Intersentia, 2019, pp. 1023–1054.



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