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Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honor for me to address you today and to be part of such a distinguished and inspiring audience. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to share this moment with esteemed professionals and dedicated experts from national libraries across Europe.

Our presence here reflects our shared commitment to knowledge, culture, and international cooperation.

**Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine in 2024–2025 in the Context of Scientific and Socio-Cultural Activities: Key Directions**

In the face of the ongoing full-scale Russian–Ukrainian war, V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine continues to fulfill its mission as the country’s national library, serving as the largest depository of documentary and information resources in Ukraine with a collection comprising 17.7 million storage units, and acting as the foremost national center for library and information services, scientific research, methodical support, and cultural and educational outreach.

Its core responsibilities include the comprehensive management and preservation of collections, the safeguarding of national memory, the continuity of essential services, and the fulfillment of its professional mandate under the challenging conditions of wartime. Central to these efforts is the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, both national documentary assets and items of global cultural significance, contained within the library’s holdings, of which more than 4 million are unique editions.

Despite the war, our library remains committed to maintaining its institutional mission while continuing, within its means and capabilities, to implement innovative technologies in its operations. Special emphasis is placed on the development of the national information space, the promotion of cultural heritage, and the creation of information resources that contribute to Ukraine’s ongoing struggle for independence.

A key area of focus has been the development of approaches to creating digital information resources in Ukrainian libraries, particularly in terms of their formation, management, preservation, and provision of access under martial law and in the context of post-war recovery. These directions have been officially recognized as strategic priorities in VNLU’s new development strategy for 2025–2030. The practical implementation of this strategic focus is aimed at the development of collections, digital resources in science and culture, and library knowledge bases; the integration of the Library’s information assets into a unified system; the advancement of the national information space; and the enhancement of library services and digital platforms. Equally important are efforts to ensure long-term preservation of these digital resources and to guarantee open access to them through the libraries’ official web portals.

In support of the development of Ukrainian science, efforts were also directed toward expanding online digital library services that facilitate access to a wide range of scientific publications and research outputs. In this context, the digital platform ResearchUA and the library portal of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, LibNAS UA, have become active components of this ecosystem. At the same time, continued attention was given to the creation, development, and regular updating of electronic library and information resources, including analytical materials and resources of national heritage significance.

Under martial law, VNLU implemented a secure storage system for critical digital data, which included configuring specialized software, establishing automated backup protocols, and monitoring data replication to ensure long-term preservation and continuous online access. This area is being developed in accordance with national recommendations for the advancement of scientific fields, specifically: *Intelligent Information and Information-Analytical Technologies; Integrated Database and Knowledge Systems*. Naturally, the implementation of these initiatives is accompanied by significant challenges, primarily resulting from limited funding, which constrains infrastructure development, slows progress, and hinders the full achievement of strategic objectives.

Of particular significance was VNLU's involvement in the Horizon Europe Policy Support Facility project "PSF Country: Support to Ukraine on Research Infrastructure Policy" (PSF analysis), launched in Ukraine in June 2024. VNLU contributes to this initiative through its participation in the project "Development and Implementation of Open Science Infrastructure in the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (OPENS)." In 2024, VNLU's efforts were directed towards the creation of one of the key segments of the open science infrastructure of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine - the Repository of Scientific Texts.

Another important area of focus involves the study, preservation, and publication of Ukraine's manuscript, book, and archival heritage. Several scholarly editions were prepared based on research into manuscript and rare book collections, highlighting the historical continuity and cultural significance of Ukrainian heritage, as well as its contribution to the broader European and global history of civilization. These efforts directly confront long-standing narratives that deny Ukraine's cultural legacy and historical statehood.

Scholarly publications of 12th–13th century manuscript and book monuments are being carried out within the framework of international collaborative projects, along with the study and presentation of documentary collections from the 14th–16th centuries in various languages. Particular attention is given to the exploration of Ukrainian historical manuscript and printed sources, including Cossack chronicles and Ukrainian chronographs of the 16th–18th centuries. The significance of this area of research lies in the fact that, throughout the 20th century, these collections were largely neglected by the Soviet authorities and considered ideologically irrelevant. Today, this gap is being actively addressed, as these valuable sources are being reintroduced into the scientific and cultural discourse. Such work aims to inform the global academic community about Ukraine's deep-rooted traditions as an educated state with a rich manuscript and book heritage - carefully preserved and now increasingly made visible through a variety of means within the global information landscape. In parallel, scholarly catalogues and reference materials are being compiled across various departments of VNLU. These are issued both as traditional printed publications and as digital records integrated into the Library's collection databases.

Comprehensive digitization efforts are actively being implemented, including the creation of thematic digital collections aimed at preserving and providing access to Ukraine's documentary heritage. VNLU's automated information system was modernized through the integration of new servers and scanners, the optimization of databases, and the development and implementation of practical guidelines for ensuring the preservation of unique manuscript and printed documents. A plan for identifying priority objects and valuable collections was approved based on such criteria as historical significance, uniqueness, the type of physical information carrier, and the actual physical condition

of materials. It is worth noting that a digital insurance resource of reserve backup copies is also being created. In 2024, approximately 500,000 scans were completed, covering manuscripts, rare books, maps, posters, and other materials. Notable ongoing projects include the "Digital Library of Historical and Cultural Heritage," the electronic library "Ukrainica," the digital resource "Electronic Exhibitions," and thematic databases of rare and valuable collections.

The devastating impact of the war on the psychological well-being of Ukrainian citizens has underscored the urgent need for accessible and reliable informational support. In response, our specialists have worked to develop a dedicated resource aimed at helping individuals cope with war-related stress and trauma. As part of this initiative, a collection of reference materials has been compiled for those in need of psychological assistance and rehabilitation. These resources include thematic guides such as "*Centers for Psychological Assistance in Ukraine*," "*Psychological Support for Ukrainians Abroad*," and "*Signs and Causes of Stress*," among others, prepared by the Department of Scientific and Information-Analytical Support of VNLU.

Structural units of VNLU such as the Information and Analytical Support Service for Public Authorities, the Fond of the Presidents of Ukraine, and the National Law Library carried out substantial work in preparing information to counter hostile information and psychological operations in Ukraine's information space, as well as in using library-accumulated knowledge resources in support of strategic communications.

Another important area of activity of the National Law Library during this period was its focused work on addressing the challenges of providing legal information services to both citizens and public authorities under wartime conditions. Notable publications prepared as part of this effort include "Integrated Library and Information Products and Services in the Field of Socio-Legal Information", "Information Support for the Rights and Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons", and "Law-Making in the Conditions of Martial Law and Post-War Recovery in Ukraine". The Library also developed databases in support of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, produced a series of bulletins, and initiated the creation of the abstract database *Foresight*.

At the same time, Library publishes up to 30 titles annually, including monographs, reference guides, bibliographic indexes, document publications (journals, collections of scholarly papers, bulletins and other materials). Notable among these are *Manuscript and Book Heritage of Ukraine* (indexed in the Scopus scientometric database), "Bibliotechnyi Visnyk" (Library Bulletin), "Biographistica" (Biographistics), and "Naukovi pratsi NBUV" (Scientific Papers of the VNLU), and others.

VNLU devotes significant attention to the development of international cooperation and partnerships. In 2024, its international activity focused on establishing, strengthening, and expanding cooperation with international library organizations, foreign library and information institutions, leading research centers, and members of the diplomatic corps. Throughout the year, VNLU welcomed representatives of foreign libraries, diplomatic missions, and civil society organizations from Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Poland, the United States, Sweden, Turkey, Hungary, and Wales (United Kingdom).

One of the most significant scholarly and communication events held by the Library in 2024 was the International Scientific Conference "*Library. Science. Communication. Integration into the International Library Space*" (October 2024), which brought together a wide range of international scholars, educators, and library and information professionals representing 13 countries: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Among the participants were representatives of prominent international organizations such as the CENL and the United Nations. Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the CENL Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network Group, and personally to Jackie Cromarty, Deputy Secretary of the Group and Head of Engagement at the National Library of Scotland, for joining our event and delivering a presentation. The presentation made a valuable contribution to the discussion on ensuring inclusivity

and equality in the library sector - topics that are a priority for European national libraries, including Vernadskyi national library.

Despite the immense challenges, the institution continues to contribute to the development of Ukraine's cultural space and the preservation of historical memory. The realities of war have led to the rethinking and refinement of scientific priorities, bringing greater practical relevance to ongoing research and introducing meaningful adjustments to the formulation of scholarly problems. The Library's staff has demonstrated resilience and determination in maintaining operations under wartime conditions. Particular attention at VNLU is devoted to volunteer activities and support for the front, provided in various forms and by different means from informational initiatives to concrete material assistance for Ukrainian soldiers.

Fortunately, our library has not experienced total destruction or the looting of cultural heritage items, as has tragically occurred in the eastern regions of Ukraine and to many Ukrainian libraries. However, it continues to suffer from the effects of nearby missile interceptions, drone and Shahed strikes, as well as a critical lack of funding, outdated computer infrastructure, and the ongoing loss of qualified professionals.

Nevertheless, we remain deeply aware of our mission as a national library - to safeguard cultural and intellectual heritage, to serve society through knowledge, and to continue building the foundations of Ukraine's future, even in the face of war. A great part of our resilience lies in your support, dear colleagues and partners, whose solidarity strengthens our determination and inspires us to move forward.

**My gratitude distinguished Colleagues for your  
tremendous and unwavering support!**