Digital Single Market Strategy

EBLIDA's Position

The Hague, 09 June 2015.

EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, welcomes the Digital Single Market Strategy, released on 6 May 2015 by the European Commission.

EBLIDA's vision is to ensure free access to information through an updated copyright framework and a wealthy information society and to pursue the building of a robust, inclusive and sustainable library and information organisation network across Europe.

EBLIDA is happy to see that President Juncker reiterates his willingness *to modernise copyright rules in the light of the digital revolution* […] *to boost digital skills and learning across society* […] *and to facilitate horizontal policy, covering all sectors of the economy and of the public sector*.

We welcome President Juncker's will to build *a vibrant knowledge-based society by creating a connected digital single market* since **libraries are helping to achieve a knowledge-based Europe** as demonstrated at the EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference *Building a Europe of Readers* of 8 May 2015*.*

The Digital Single Market Strategy sets out ambitious goals and key issues that need to involve the public sector in full and EBLIDA is ready to help to improve :

- **access to and use of copyright-protected content[1],**
- **cross-border aspects of activities related to access to knowledge, research and heritage[2],**
- **training in digital skills**[3].

Market-led solutions have proven ineffective over the past years and often lead to a **licence paralysis** that need to be overcome. EBLIDA has been advocating for **copyright reform**, benefitting all and asking for:

1. Better harmonisation of national legislation - and in particular exceptions and limitations of Directive 2001/29/EC related to libraries and archives and for the purpose of education and research to be made mandatory - to allow the emergence of a genuine European market, facilitating exchange and cross-border institutional cooperation in the interest of citizens;
2. Provisions making null and void any contractual commercial clause contrary to the rights, exceptions and limitations enshrined in law;
3. Libraries to obtain the right to acquire at normal market price any work made legally available for purchase to the public, including digital works, confirming the transfer of ownership and exhaustion induced by this purchase;
4. The right of the reader to access legally acquired digital works via libraries, guaranteeing libraries a lending right, including remote e-lending as well as international inter-library lending, with authors and/or rights holders to benefit from a balanced and fair compensation when applicable;
5. Removal of technological protection measures should be made compulsory for all legitimate uses;

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[1] See *Commission Staff working Document, A digital Single Market Stategy for Europe – Analysis and Evidence*, 6 May 2015, p.25, http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/digital-single-market/docs/dsm-swd_en.pdf.
[2] Ibid. p.28.
[3] See *Minutes of the 2125th meeting of the Commission held in Brussels (Berlaymont) on Wednesday 6 May 2015 (morning)*, p.10, http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/10061/2015/EN/10061-2015-2125-EN-F1-1.PDF.

6. An open norm should be introduced to enable exceptions and limitations to keep pace with technological changes within the existing copyright framework;
7. Licensing terms and conditions for e-content to support libraries' missions and activities and specifically regarding e-books, to follow EBLIDA's K*ey Principles on the Acquisition and Access to E-Books*[4]

The shift towards the digital world is challenging the way citizens access information.
The low skilled, especially those with literacy problems, have lost out badly in the recession and as the digital world becomes ever more pervasive their exclusion from society risks becoming more deeply embedded.
Never before has literacy been so important to the well-being of individuals, communities or nations[5].

For that reason EBLIDA is also deeply committed to the **European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET)** since :

1. The social inclusion agenda is a key motivator for many library services.
2. It forms part of a broader set of literacies that libraries are keen to facilitate, including digital literacy and information literacy - all important life skills of the modern world.
3. It is set within a context of libraries providing individuals and communities with access to ideas, information and works of imagination, and supporting and enriching all aspects of human life, from work to learning, citizenship to leisure and health to creativity.
4. Libraries in Europe underpin the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy by enabling "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth".

Throughout Europe, libraries form a network of about 70000 structures at the service of European citizens.
Libraries are gateways to recorded human knowledge, providing access to information in all format and delivering basic skills training and initiation to digital competences.

For the Digital Single Market to offer real opportunities to EU citizens, it will need to rely on the existing network and experience of libraries and their staff.

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About EBLIDA

The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) is an independent umbrella association of library, information, documentation and archive associations and institutions in Europe representing 100+ members in all EU member states and other European countries, as well as by extension 70.000 libraries in Europe.

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[4] http://www.eblida.org/Special%20Events/Key-principles-acquistion-eBooks-November2012/GB_English%20Version%20Key%20Principles.pdf

[5] Libraries and Literacy, http://www.eblida.org/Activities/Publication/Eblida-egcis_libraries_and_literacy.pdf.