The EBLIDA Newsletter is published monthly on European library & information society issues, programmes, news and events of interest to the library, archive and cultural heritage community.

Issue No. 3. March 2019

The President’s Editorial

Dear colleagues,

Dear friends,

We have had an active month with the finalising of our new EBLIDA Strategic Plan during the Executive Committee meeting in Naples on the 4th of March. The Strategic plan is laid out below by our Director, Giuseppe Vitiello and will be put forward at the Council meeting in Dublin in June for approval. We are hoping to engage you, our members, in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

There have been further developments in our Conference Programme and I’m delighted to inform you that invitations will go out this week to our members. Registration is now open and the Programme is ready, subject to minor changes.

Read the article by our Director, Giuseppe Vitiello on the Conference.

The European elections are almost upon us. On 23rd of May European citizens will make a striking choice, whether to endorse parties pleading for populism and sovereign values or the reinforcement of European unity.
of the library missions. EBLIDA has joined with enthusiasm IFLA, SPARC, LIBER and PL2030 in promoting a Library Manifesto for Europe, that addresses critical questions of fundamental value not only for libraries but for Europe as well. Before the elections the directive on copyright in the single market will very likely be approved. Two interesting months ahead of us, for sure.

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

INSIDE EBLIDA

EBLIDA Executive Committee meeting in Naples
4 March 2019

The Executive Committee meeting took place against the backdrop of vibrant Napoli. Fruitful and constructive discussions were held, with many decisions and developments regarding the EBLIDA Strategy as you will read below. Dublin was also discussed and you will read more about that under the EBLIDA NAPLE Conference paragraph further down.

After the board meeting, a meeting was held with the Campania (Naples region) Library Directors. CIRA Director provided a good introduction to the Campania library system where there is a good network of academic libraries but the public library infrastructure is almost non-existent, with the remarkable exception of the Scampia library, a difficult area in the Naples neighborhood.

EBLIDA Strategic Plan 2019-2022: between tradition and innovation

Look back to 1992. While all libraries were coping with, and sometimes getting lost in the incoming web technologies, EBLIDA was the only library organisation dealing with copyright and doing library advocacy with European institutions – a concept well developed in North America, much less known in Europe. The 2016-2019 EBLIDA strategy echoed a corporate identity which was encapsulated in a few goals where advocacy, copyright and European institutions were seen as EBLIDA’s core business.

And now look at 2019. All library organisations deal, or try to deal, with European institutions. EBLIDA cannot claim to be “the” voice, the only voice of library organisations since all of them advocate for libraries and for library projects. And finally, copyright is a central issue, transversal to many library operations.
weaknesses of the organisation in the face of a political and social environment which has been impoverished, in many senses, by the 2008 global crisis. A strategy for EBLIDA needs to reflect the transition towards a concept of libraries that is no longer restricted to the provision of collections. EBLIDA also must look deeper, and critically, inside and outside itself.

The new 2019-2022 Strategic Plan has been prepared by a team including the Members of the Executive Committee and the EBLIDA Director. They started to peruse the Vision and the Missions of the 2016-2019 Strategy. An accurate scrutiny showed that both could still be considered valid. The Europe that is likely to emerge after the European elections may require, however, a closer link between freedom of expression and access to information. Libraries should also engage more in promoting citizens’ active participation in a democratic and plural society.

The Strategic Team considered EBLIDA’s Vision and Missions adequate to the new library and societal environment. The strategic goals envisaged in the 2016-2019 Strategy came under radar, since copyright and e-lending can no longer be activities of exclusive relevance of EBLIDA. LIBER, IFLA, SPARC, CENL, to mention a few, are important actors with whom EBLIDA has to cooperate. Objectives have to be better focused.

**Four Strands were therefore identified by the Strategic Team:**

1) **The Political Level,**
2) **The Legislative Framework,**
3) **Policy-making for Libraries,** and
4) **The Socio-Educational impact of Libraries.**

**Strand number 1 the Political Level,** highly relies on the Library Manifesto for Europe. Initiated by PL 2030 with a fully-fledged strategy implying a “Before” and “After” European Elections, the Manifesto is the result of a joint effort undertaken by PL 2030, IFLA, LIBER, SPARC Europe and, of course, EBLIDA. EBLIDA wrote the document comparing national voting systems and structures of library associations. In its meeting in Naples, the EBLIDA Executive Committee approved the Manifesto with minor amendments.

**Strand number 2 The Legislative Framework** concerns activities on copyright for which EBLIDA may benefit from a brilliant group of experts also enlarged to other organisations (IFLA, LIBER, CENL). Beyond copyright, legislation includes many other acts or bills having relevance for libraries. EBLIDA has substantial experience in the field and will work on these issues in collaboration with its Members.

**Strand number 3 Policy-making** is a field where library facts and situations do not seem to be reflected adequately in national evaluation systems. Traditional indicators are by far collection-related and quantitative, whereas the library vision and its contribution to national and international growth is de facto linked with other criteria. The library real life has to be grasped by new indicators which should take into account, for instance, social inclusion, informal learning and literacy.

**Strand number 4** of the Strategic Plan includes a reflection and policy towards open access for public libraries. Open access falls under the exclusive realm of academic libraries – it is about Impact Factor, academic journals and platform for open science. No, or very few platforms aggregate instead educational materials - freely accessible MOOCs, Tutorials, etc. present on the Web. The “market” for educational material in open access is still in a pre-competitive stage and, therefore, there may be a role to be played by public libraries as distributors of educational material in open access and, on the other hand, as collectors of open access materials produced by communities.

In a nutshell, the plan that is submitted to the EBLIDA Council may seem ambitious but it is a
should work more and provide better services for EBLIDA Members.

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**EBLIDA Council and EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference**

**Dublin, 24 and 25 June 2019**

*Libraries open for all: more than just a slogan*

It is with great pleasure that I am informing EBLIDA Members about the development of the Annual EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference in Dublin (25 June 2019). Organisational issues have found brilliant solutions thanks to the work undertaken by the [Irish Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)](http://lgma.org). The programme has eventually taken shape and we are honored to have confirmations from Marie Østergaard, Director of Dokk1, Denmark, and Mr Martin Berendse, Director of the Public Library in Amsterdam.

There is a lot of talk about open access, but the open concept is far more extensive than just access to library premises and collections; it is open-minded libraries, open governance in an open environment. And we expect that our distinguished speakers will explore all lights and shades of what open means.

The novelty of the Conference is very likely the organisation of working group sessions in which the new 2019-2022 EBLIDA Strategic Plan will be discussed. We will ask Ms Mairead McGuinness, Irish MEP, to illustrate the forthcoming Library Manifesto for Europe (Strand One: Political level) released on the occasion of the European elections and signed by EBLIDA and four other library organisations: IFLA, LIBER, PL 2030 and SPARC Europe.

EBLIDA Members will discuss the three other strands in the afternoon sessions by joining one of the three Working Groups: the first devoted to library legislation, the second focused on policy-making for libraries and the third dealing with the socio-educational impact of libraries (respectively, Strands 2, 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan).

One speaker will introduce the issue in the session that will be chaired by one of the Executive Committee Members: Jean-Marie Reding for Working Group 1 on the Legislative Framework, Stefano Parise for Working Group 2 Policy-Making for Libraries, and Anders Söderbäck for the Socio-Educational Impact of Libraries.

The aim of these Working Groups is not only to have a better insight into the Strategy the Secretariat
should follow, it is also to prepare an Operational Plan where Members can determine by themselves the steps needed and to make the Strategic Plan operational and what is needed in EBLIDA’s member country.

We do hope that you will find the programme interesting and will attend the Conference with your usual luggage of good ideas and enthusiasm. Invitations for the Conference will be sent out this week to members and the Programme is now online on our website.

For online registration please click here!

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**GUEST ARTICLE**

**Looking for librarian – not library - laws by Jean-Marie Reding**

by Jean-Marie Reding

One of EBLIDA’s new strategy elements is to build up an online collection of library legislation in Europe. As one of the future collaborators of such a list of library laws, the author of these lines is interested in a special topic among all possible laws in Europe: he is looking for legislation about librarians – not libraries. However, laws about librarian careers and status issues are not relevant for him. In fact, I want to know if missions, or the rights and the duties, of librarians – not libraries – are included in some laws and regulations in Europe.

You would reply: why not use codes of ethics? They are designed for all humans working in libraries. Yes, such codes are nice to have, but to see the role of a librarian in a real law would constitute an important societal upgrade.

Strange idea? How come? In some countries, press legislation gives a considerable democratic power to another type of guarantors of an informational pluralism as librarians, acting louder and more extroverted: journalists. They belong together, with librarians, archivists and others, to the information intermediaries, according to the IFLA Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development (2014). Moreover, it is true: librarians and journalists share the same values. Opinion building is a core business of both professions, as well as the dissemination of up-to-date and reliable information. However, these media professionals, as journalists are called too, have a formidable advantage: they represent the so-called fourth power. Media can overthrow governments, libraries cannot! (Marcus Banks: Our vocation is information. In: American Libraries. The magazine of the ALA. June 2018, p. 40-43. https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/06/01/our-vocation-is-information-librarianship-journalism/)

Journalists are legally well protected by press legislation and enjoy a heavy reputation and even a high immunity. Nevertheless, what about librarians? Do "librarian laws" or "librarians in laws" exist? An international comparison of existing library laws is sobering: the institution is always in the foreground!
The author of this article asks himself: What if librarians could benefit from similar inviolability? For the sake of democracy, we like so much? As a pluralism guarantee law, in a sense a librarian law, or librarian protection or liberty law, which could avoid any political interference in the diversity of library collections for example.

On the other hand, what about librarian title protection measures? Who can call himself a librarian? Only holders of a corresponding academic title? A law could have a deterrent effect, including by imposing fines on title presumptions. In some countries the journalist title is protected.

Conclusion: A librarian law in a democracy can be a kind of anti-abuse and general protection law, as it already exists for journalists. In addition, a librarian qualification can be secured and upgraded.

Democracy needs more and more defenders. Not only journalists, but librarians too.

Please contact me, if a something like a librarian law or something similar exists in your country. Email: Jean-Marie.Reding[at]bnl.etat.lu

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**Events and Dates**

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