The President’s Editorial

Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,

After the Copyright Storm, we are coming back to business as usual. Usual, however, does not mean ordinary.

EBLIDA is preparing its 2019 Annual Conference, which will take place in Dublin on 25th June. This year, the EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference is divided into two sections. The morning session is devoted to the concept of open libraries, where open is modulated in multiple definitions. Prestigious speakers will introduce the 24/7 library concept, open access and its meaning for public libraries, the rationale behind a library open to all – all publics in all conditions for all requirements.

The second section is focused on the new 2019-2022 EBLIDA Strategic Plan. We are not only aiming to validate and disseminate EBLIDA strategy for the next three years. We also would like to lay a solid foundation to EBLIDA activities and nurture both the Conference and the strategy with proposals, documentation and any other material that can be useful for the development of the Strategic Plan.

An inspired librarian, David Lankes, wrote: “Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities”. What is great for libraries is also true for library...
Members themselves to build up the EBLIDA community, where common values and missions are shared. It is the reason why this Newsletter issue includes large sections of the Background Paper to the EBLIDA-NAPLE Annual Conference.

The Background Paper reflects EBLIDA's working methods - the elaboration of a policy likely to be shared at European level, which takes into account cultural diversity and local needs. The European Union is a community-based continent, by definition. It is based on nations working together towards a unitary goal. EBLIDA community is value-based – it is a hub for all library organizations in Europe striving towards an equitable, democratic and sustainable society.

Let EBLIDA's values cross frontiers and be transferred to Europe!

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

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PL 2030 Communiqué

The European elections are just two weeks away! As part of their library advocacy strategy, Public Libraries 2030 is gathering input from libraries and library associations across Europe and EBLIDA is ready to support PL 2030’s endeavor.

As you know, these elections shape the European Parliament and influence other EU institutions for the next five years. This year’s elections are critical due to the huge issues linked to the future of Europe such as the rise of populism, fake news, the erosion of democracy, and Brexit. Current predictions estimate that half of current Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will leave and be replaced by new MEPs.

Public Libraries 2030 is looking to re-launch their MEP Library Lovers group with new incoming MEPs.

This group brings together MEPs passionate about libraries from across the political spectrum and from all EU countries. In the run-up to the European elections, Public Libraries 2030 is tracking which candidates are the ones to watch in each country, ready to recruit them into the MEP Library Lovers group once elected.

This is where you come in – get in touch with PL2030 to share your insider knowledge. Which are with your country’s top three MEP candidates to watch? Just email tiana@pl2030.eu before the 23rd of May.

EBLIDA and PL 2030 work together to promote library advocacy in Europe. Please look here for more information on the work Public Libraries 2030 does and here for more information on the MEP Library Lovers group.
In a society, trends are clearly identified and nearly impossible to change. Catalysts, instead, are phenomena or events that impact on trends to an extent that is hard to assess, since their likeliness to happen is uncertain. Catalysts for library change may accelerate the transformation of libraries provided that library decision-makers are able to intercept them, re-orient library activities in an appropriate way and come out with innovative solutions.

Between 2019 and 2022, these are the four catalysts likely to have a big impact on library development:

- **Active participation and the struggle for an equitable and democratic society**;
- **The UN Sustainable Development Goals**;
- **The Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market**;
- **Artificial Intelligence**.

**Active participation and the struggle for an equitable and democratic society**

Libraries’ mission is to promote freedom of information and free access to information, education and culture for all citizens in Europe. The struggle for an equitable and democratic society is a main priority for libraries in the near future in an environment where a well-informed debate with clear questions and outcomes is becoming rare goods. Trolls and fake news represent a barrier to communication that promotes online disinformation and Euroscepticism.

This phenomenon implies deep re-thinking of how libraries communicate. Communication in libraries normally takes place through information dissemination and the use of library catalogues. Most of what used to be manual three decades ago is now automated. Further developments can be expected by the use of Artificial Intelligence Tools.

The struggle for an equitable and democratic society requires one step further. It consists of organizing the content hold by libraries. What is the point, otherwise, in storing a rich reservoirs of information if it is superseded or simply ignored through a tweet? Libraries can organize web pages including extracts from books and papers stored in their collections. Certified, library-branded information included in library collections may contrast against simple solutions proposed by populists. Libraries should organize their counter-information with quotations from classical books on democracy and well commented bibliographies complementing traditional library catalogues. Libraries’ impact in national political debates can also be raised thanks to their infrastructure – a capillary distribution throughout the territory of a country.

**UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The UN SDGs are not a book of dreams. They consist of concrete measures – themselves structured in a series of sub-goals and indicators - aiming to contrast current human-driven developments leading our planet to disaster. Even if climate change and natural environment are core objectives, the 17 Goals address problems in a global way and set out a strategy whose final objective is to save the planet through a sustainable human environment.

Libraries are key institutions for achieving the Goals. Each of them can contribute to the accomplishment of UN SDGs. One step further – and this is the task of library associations or other authoritative institutions - is to articulate a reasoned and well defined methodology where legislative and policy measure are re-examined to see to what extent they meet UN SDGs. By library legislation is meant not only library bills regulating national library systems and infrastructure. It is also meant whatever provision is relevant for libraries or affects its way of functioning. Provisions concerning health, urban regeneration, copyright, may re-orient the role of libraries just as much as a proper
**Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market**

With the emergence of digital networks the role of libraries has diminished in concomitance with the advent of conglomerates providing for easy and often free access to information. Google Maps, Google Books, Google Scholar and other services are universally used. The perception that more and more information in digital form can be made accessible for free has grown together with the power of the information service conglomerates. All this comes with an invisible cost: the occupation of the private sphere, where personal data are delivered to conglomerates and used by them to manipulate consumers’ choices towards market-oriented opportunities.

It is perhaps an illusion to think that the Copyright Directive re-establishes a two-network environment – a commercial network including publishing and audiovisual companies, vs. a non-commercial network of libraries, guaranteed by public legislation and resources. The power of information service providers is based on the kind of social agreement Google, Apple, Facebooks, Amazon, Microsoft make with their consumers - a culture of connectivity where the public and the private sphere intertwine. Nevertheless, a copyright dense digital environment assigns libraries, and the international organizations representing them, huge responsibilities on how to construct the infosphere generated by the Directive and to make the most out of the exceptions and limitations included in it.

The way libraries will channel the products they manage, the forms of connectivity they will adopt on their platforms may be an example of information economics where algorithms and artificial intelligence tools are applied in an ethical way, that is independent on profit laws. Another responsibility of libraries is to be able to repair market distortions, where libraries are warrant of a pluralistic and diverse approach to information. Opposite to alliances between web conglomerates and publishing giants, it is the responsibility of libraries, and in particular of public libraries, to diversify their offer and promote platforms alternatives to mainstream commercial flow of information. Libraries will have to mobilize with a view to consolidating their public representation as non-commercial networks providing access to information for all - the same role they enjoy in the analogue, printed world.

**Artificial Intelligence**

AI systems use natural language processing, ontologies and reasoning in order to gather and extract information from large data sources identifying the cause and effect within data. They process knowledge systems and, through the process of learning, identify relationships and connections between databases. Big data tools and AI software will initially be easily accessible to large, rich and powerful organizations. Subsequently, these tools will be commoditized and accessible to anyone, with grassroots initiatives reversing the top-down approach. This creates an opportunity for services provided by individuals and organizations of all types, from companies to non-profit organizations and governments.

AI research should be safe and beneficial to humanity and based on human values and judgement as well as on fundamental rights. The tipping point for AI is expected to happen in 2025-2026 but solutions for preparing this future are being worked out now. It is possible that all library transactions can be replaced by AI-based services. Therefore, if libraries are not aware of how they can use AI at best, they will adopt AI solutions passively instead of smartly driving the process.
The 2019-2022 EBLIDA Strategic Plan is divided into four Strands:

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

Each of these Strands goes together with several flagship projects.

Strand number 1 "The Political Level" concerns EBLIDA's traditional work of advocacy with European institutions.

The project associated with this Strand is the promotion of a Library Manifesto for Europe. Initiated by PL2030 with a fully-fledged strategy implying a “Before” and an “After” European Elections, the Manifesto is the result of a joint effort undertaken by PL 2030, IFLA, LIBER, SPARC Europe and, of course, EBLIDA. During its meeting in Naples, the EBLIDA Executive Committee approved the Manifesto with minor amendments.

Strand number 2 "The Legislative Framework" concerns library activities on copyright on the one hand, and library acts or bills pivoting national library policies.

The two projects associated with Strand 2 are:

a) continuation of work on copyright undertaken in collaboration with IFLA, LIBER, SPARC, CENL and other associations, and


Strand number 3 "Policy-making" originates because it has been found that library facts and situations do not seem to be reflected adequately in national statistics evaluating library performances at national and European level.

The project associated with Strand 3 is the setting up of library qualitative indicators in addition to the quantitative indicators linked with document circulation that are normally used to evaluate libraries and library collections.

Strand number 4 concerns "The Socio-educational impact of libraries", i.e. policies going beyond the traditional function of libraries. They concern engagement in communities, literacy activities, non-informal learning including self-learning, social inclusion.

The project associated with Strand 4 is LBY-LHY (Learn By Yourself, the Library will Help You), where libraries create and maintain aggregations of educational materials online in open access useful for the development of literacy and informal (self-) learning.

2019-2022: EBLIDA Strategic Plan. Focus on Strand n. 3: “Policy-making”

Library statistics in the European Union started to be collected in a more systematic and intensive manner around 1990-2000, thanks to funding provided by the European Commission. Unfortunately, this statistical series was not given a follow up and the numerous
attempts to collect library statistics resumed only ten years later thanks to EBLIDA (2013-2015) and the IFLA Library Map of the World. In 2017, PL 2030 combined IFLA Library Map of the World with other indicators in its EU Library Factsheets.

Usual figures about EU libraries record 65,000 public libraries which are attended by some 100 million annual visitors. One-fifth of the European population are active users. Quantitative indicators about libraries normally include registered users, number of visits and number of loans, both in physical or in a digital form.

Problematic issues about library statistics are: data quality, their scope and how they are used. Data quality is still unsatisfactory, although the EC initial investment has encouraged the comparability of library figures. The scope of statistics leaves much to desire. If statistical concepts should correspond to empirically observable facts or situations, it can be easily said that the “social” library - library services performed with migrants, minorities, socially excluded citizens – is not recorded anywhere. The impact of libraries should be assessed in terms of urban planning, social inclusion and democratic participation.

Rather than in the intensity of use of library resources, library practices should be seen in terms of modalities of use. The identification of library performance indicators of social impact may include, for instance, the number of voluntary and community groups normally linked to the library service, the proportion of hours when libraries are used for organised activities apart from traditional library services, the staff time percentage dedicated to contact with the public, and formal connections with schools and colleges as well as with local businesses.

These types of statistics are strongly needed. However impressive library statistics may seem, they are far from satisfactory. For instance, the figure of 100 million annual library visitors in Europe can be dismissed with a scorn by a biased economist who might infer that similar, and perhaps better, results are achieved by social media, search engines and similar channels.

How library statistics are used is therefore important to determine both their quality and scope. Library statistics may be used to formulate cultural policies, to nurture educational objectives, or to validate social policies. Each of these uses need different sets of statistics to be processed in a way that is consistent with the desired results these policies wish to achieve.

6. Countdown to EBLIDA-NAPLE 2019 Conference

We are very excited to welcome you to Dublin next month. Please do register as soon as possible!

Our hosts, LGMA, will soon promote the Conference locally so spaces will fill up quickly.

Our Programme is now ready you can find it now online, subject to minor changes and also here below.

24 June 2019, Monday

Host: Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

Venue: No 6, Kildare Street, Dublin, Ireland
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-13:00</td>
<td>Lunch and welcoming coffee/tea for all EBLIDA and NAPLE Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00-16:30</td>
<td>Council Meeting EBLIDA (for EBLIDA Members only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:30-17:30</td>
<td>Reception for EBLIDA and NAPLE Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-12:00</td>
<td>NAPLE e-book Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00-12:00</td>
<td>NAPLE Board Meeting</td>
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<td>NAPLE General Assembly (for NAPLE Members only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30-17:30</td>
<td>Reception for EBLIDA and NAPLE Members</td>
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**NAPLE**

**Conference Dinner**

19:30  
**Location:** Rustic Stone Restaurant, South Georges St., Dublin 2

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**Conference: "Libraries open for all"**

08:30 – 09:30  
Conference Registration

09:30 – 09:50  
Official Opening and Introduction

**Morning Session Chair: Anders Cato (NAPLE Chair)**

**Tom Enright** (Chief Executive of Wexford County Council, Ireland)

**Anders Cato** (NAPLE Chair, Denmark) on behalf of NAPLE & EBLIDA

09:50 – 10:20  
Keynote speech

- **Marie Østergaard** (Director of Dokk1, Denmark)

10:20 – 10:50  
Libraries, Politics and Policy

- **Mairead McGuinness** (First Vice-President of the European Parliament) - (TBC)

10:50 – 11:05  
Coffee Break

11:05 – 12:50  
Panel: Libraries open for All

- **David Dalton** (Principal Officer, Libraries Development and Community Policy, Department of Rural and Community Development, Ireland)
- **Cathal McCauley** (University Librarian, Maynooth University, Ireland)
- **Elisabet Rundqvist** (National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, Sweden)
- **Libraries open for All gives a lot of possibilities**
- **Marit Vestlie** (National Library of Norway, Oslo, Norway)

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Afternoon Session Chair: Ton van Vlimmeren (EBLIDA President)

During the EBLIDA EC meeting (4 March 2019) the new 2019-2022 EBLIDA Strategic Plan was approved. EBLIDA Members are asked to reinforce / extend / modulate the Strategic Plan. Therefore, the Conference will split into 3 Working Group Sessions, each of them dealing with a Strand (see below).

Sessions will be introduced by a Speaker and moderated by the EBLIDA Member sponsoring the Strand. Participants will discuss on concepts, plans and experiences supporting each specific Strand.

At the end of the session the Chairs will report on the results of the three working sessions.

13:00 – 14:15
Lunch

14:15 – 16:00

**Working Group Session 1: Library legislation**

14:15 – 14:30 Speaker: Giuseppe Vitiello (Director, EBLIDA)
14:30 – 16:00 Working Group on the scope of library legislation
*Chair: Jean-Marie Reding* (Treasurer, EBLIDA, Luxembourg)

**Working Group Session 2: Policy making for libraries**

14:15 – 14:30 Speaker: (TBA)
14:30 – 16:00 Working Group on qualitative indicators for libraries
*Chair: Stefano Parise* (Vice-President, EBLIDA, Italy)

**Working Group Session 3: Library and their educational-social impact**

14:15 – 14:30 Speaker: Martin Berendse (Director, Amsterdam Public Library, Netherlands)
14:30 – 16:00 Working group on open access for public libraries
*Chair: Anders Söderbäck* (Member, EBLIDA Executive Board, Sweden)

16:00 – 16:10
Public Libraries 2030 – EBLIDA Cooperation

**Ilona Kish** (Director, Public Libraries 2030, Belgium)

16:10 – 16:55
Reports by the Working Groups Chairs

16:10-16.25: Working Group 1 - Jean-Marie Reding (Treasurer, EBLIDA, Luxembourg)
16:25-16:40: Working Group 2 - Stefano Parise (Vice-President, EBLIDA, Italy)
16:40-16:55: Working Group 3 - Anders Söderbäck (Member, EBLIDA Executive Board, Sweden)

16:55 – 17:15
Closing session - Conclusions of the day
Events and Dates

**May**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>5th International Scientific Conference - Information Science in the Age of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>XVI Jornadas Españolas de Información y Documentación / XVI Spanish Days of Information and Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-31</td>
<td>Florence, Italy</td>
<td>11th Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference (QQML2019)</td>
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