Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,

Only six weeks we are on our way in 2019 and already it promises to be an exciting year.

The suspense around Brexit continues and the impact on our colleagues in different countries and working relations is still unclear.

On copyright, after several weeks, and after France and Germany achieved a compromise on some key provisions in the draft Directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market, on February 13th, an agreement has been reached between the European Parliament and Council negotiators on the content of this new piece of legislation.

The European elections are coming up and actions by and for libraries are prepared.

Public Libraries 2030 has launched itself and promises to be an interesting partner that is complementary to the work of EBLIDA. We look forward to continue the
Giuseppe Vitiello, our director, has been very productive and has undertaken many actions to get in touch with members, to continue relations with partners and to work on different strands for our strategy.

I am happy that, after a delay caused by the absence of a director, we are now preparing to share our strategy with the members and discuss it during the annual conference in June in Dublin.

All-in-all the work isn’t finished yet and we continue to cooperate with our partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for libraries and information- and documentation associations in Europe.

Let us hope that Spring will bring good news for all.

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

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**INSIDE EBLIDA**

**EBLIDA Executive Committee meeting in Naples**

*4 March 2019*

Only a few weeks left before we kick off our first official EBLIDA Executive Committee meeting of the year, and for our new Director, Giuseppe Vitiello, it will be his first time meeting many of our Committee members.

We look forward to a fruitful meeting with our colleagues in Naples, who are hosting us – thank you for your kind and wonderful Italian hospitality!

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**EBLIDA Council and EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference**

Online Registration is now open!
We are continuing to make progress in organising the EBLIDA NAPLE Conference in Dublin on 24th and 25th of June and delighted to announce that Registration for the EBLIDA Council and EBLIDA-NAPLE Conference is now open. Register today, please click here!

The EBLIDA Executive Committee and EBLIDA Secretariat are linking the content of the Annual Council and Conference to the new EBLIDA Strategic Plan. This explains why the programme of the Annual Council Conference has not yet been published. We wish to find speakers who will not only provide inspiring visions on innovative and successful services in their open libraries, but who will also be instrumental in promoting the new Strategic Plan through creative implementation and best practices in our European libraries.

We are excited to reveal to you as soon as possible a Preliminary Programme. We have already secured at least 2 speakers and next week we will have another telephone call with our hosts, LGMA Ireland, to further progress the process.

The Preliminary Programme, because we would like it to be aligned with our new Strategic Plan, to be approved in Naples on 4th March, will be available soon thereafter.

In the meantime, we hope that you have been successful in making travel arrangements and bearing in mind that LIBER will hold their Annual Conference on the day after ours, also in Dublin. Perhaps you could visit both Conferences!

INSIDE BRUSSELS

Copyright

After over 2 years of deliberations, the negotiators agreed on a provisional trilogue agreement during yesterday’s trilogue meeting. There is both good and not so good news for libraries.

It’s here – Public Libraries 2030 has officially launched!

As you may remember, the Public Libraries 2020 programme wound down at the end of 2018 and the team have been working hard to launch the new organisation over the last few months.

PL2030 Director, Ilona Kish said:

“Building on the achievements of the past 5 years means we can hit the ground running. We have an amazing board of leaders from some of the most innovative libraries in Europe and a wider network of support from some fantastic library advocates and partners.

We’re honoured to have EBLIDA President, Ton Van Vlimmeren, as one of our founding members, which further strengthens the bond between PL2030 and EBLIDA, working towards our common goals.”

Continuity and collaboration are even more important given that the European elections are coming in May, and PL2030 has been announced as an official partner to the European Parliament. This year’s elections are critical with huge issues at stake for the future of Europe, such as the rise of populism and fake news, the erosion of democracy and, of course, Brexit.

In partnership with both EBLIDA and IFLA, PL2030 will work to develop a range of tools and opportunities for libraries to explore these important issues at the heart of our European democracies.

This shows how the new organisation can help to create vital new projects and community services to tackle the global issues facing EU citizens – and it also demonstrates PL2030’s commitment to maintaining our current partnerships with
library organisations across Europe, as well as forging new ones. PL2030 Director, Ilona Kish: “We know that our partnerships strengthen and improve our work and we will continue to play an active role in this growing European library network.”

We all know that libraries provide spaces that can help solve the crucial issues facing EU citizens. With the support of EBLIDA and their members, Public Libraries 2030 will create connections that deliver innovative new projects and demonstrate to decision makers the many ways in which libraries improve lives and communities.

Find out more about PL2030 on the brand new website: https://publiclibraries2030.eu and keep up to date via social media: Twitter (@LibrariesEU), Facebook (LibrariesEU) and LinkedIn (Public Libraries 2030).

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**GUEST ARTICLE**

**How free are “little free libraries”? Potential problems with trendy book exchange boxes in public space**

by Jean-Marie Reding, EBLIDA correspondent (Western European Lilliput state librarian)

The role of a librarian is comparable to that of a filter. In a good sense, librarians are similar to journalists and act like “watchdogs of democracy”; in a bad sense, they act like censors and mind controllers, depending on the political situation.

We normally learn at library school that the state protects its citizens from "harmful" literature. That’s why a certain number of prohibitions for the protection of public morality exists. These do not only apply to libraries, but also to bookcases in public spaces, sometimes called “little free libraries”. To avoid that a trendy book exchange boxes does not degenerate into "hell" (French: Enfer / German: Giftschrank) and his owner does not end up in the
The path of virtue begins with a look into the national criminal code. In some countries, like for example the “code pénal” in Luxembourg, it prohibits the dissemination of writings which:

- cause acts of terrorism;
- contain insults against ministers, parliamentarians and state authority;
- violate the family order and public morality, to protect the youth (example: pornography (international obscene publications treaties)) and writings, images, etc. indecent of nature to disturb their young imagination;
- slander persons;
- calling for racism, revisionism and other sexual and religious discrimination, like by incitement against persons or groups of people, or by trivializing genocide (example: historical negationism) and war crimes.

Child protection also includes publications, which are to some extent harmful to health, like by encouraging the use of illegal but also legal drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco. Many of these restrictions tend to cause confusion. In the final instance, the courts decide.

Even the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 provides for restrictions on freedom of expression in a democratic society (article 10 (2)). These are: “national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.” No kidding, folks!

If the owner of a book exchange box, usually a public (local government) or a private person, complies with all these regulations, he must be prepared for further possible sacrilege. Because even in a democracy, society is also endangered by “bad” or “wrong books”. These are so-called banned books (check the famous US-“banned books weeks”), with topics that upset readers, or are scary, but – very important – not forbidden by law! In the unfiltered bookcase, some subjects can develop an explosive effect.

For example, in the not for the general public special collections of libraries, books on the following topics can be found:

1. religion (Islam, creationism), occultism, witchcraft, magic, sects (Scientology), parapsychology;
2. sexuality (homosexuality, sexual education, sexual acts, pregnancy, paedophilia (novels), AIDS, erotic (art), sadomasochism);
3. illegal acts (handbooks on crime, serial killing, suicide, illegal drugs (production and use, habituation), poisons);
4. politically sensitive issues (love, sentimental life, war, family, smoker, death, abortion, miscarriage, illness, loneliness, despair, euthanasia, environment...
5. violent acts (violence, rape);
6. too insightful enlightenment books (works on racism or obscenity);
7. pseudo-scientific publications, consisting of untruths, presented as indisputable, questioning a universally recognized reality by the scientific community (example: existence of UFOs).

A librarian always makes a choice, a subjective one. That's part of the job. As a true balancing artist the librarian should guarantee a neutral media selection. Choose the "good" or "right books". Nevertheless, how good, how neutral? The selection falls "naturally" on the publications, which are appropriate to the current social consensus. Democracy is known to be the tyranny of the majority (quote of John Stuart Mill).

The probably ignorant bearer of a bookcase must therefore be aware of the legal consequences that can be caused by books, placed there by anonymous persons. As, if every user in a public library could put a book on the shelf unchecked. For almost a millennium, there is a tradition of asking about the ownership (bookplates) of books made available to the public - and thus the responsibility of the book selection. This can explain why socially romantic experiments such as bookcases are often doomed to failure in the long term.

Especially public actors want to prevent any bookcase abuse by following these strategies:

1. the cheapest one consists of informing citizens to please respect existing legislation when putting books in it;
2. give an association the permission to establish bookcases on local ground, with the duty to check and exchange the content regularly;
3. send out a civil servant – sometimes a member of the existing local library – to keep an eye on these bookcases at least once a week.

In relation with strategy N°3: may these investments be better spent in true libraries with responsible librarians! The step from the bookcase keeper to the librarian and the bookcase to the library can be a short one.
**5 reasons why membership matters**

### Events and Dates

#### February

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<td>London, UK</td>
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<td>28-1 March</td>
<td>Graz, Austria</td>
<td>8th Digitale Bibliothek &quot;Digitale Horizonte&quot; - &quot;Digital Horizons&quot;</td>
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<td>11-12</td>
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<td>Helsinki, Finland</td>
<td>The Marrakesh Treaty in Action</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-14</td>
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EBLIDA-LIST is a general mailing list intended to foster communications between EBLIDA, its membership and members of the European library community. The goal is to facilitate information exchange as well as professional communication and development within the EBLIDA community. Subscribe now!