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

The EBLIDA Newsletter is focused on Resourcing Libraries in the European Union (RL:EU), a European project with two partners: PINA (a Slovenian agency) and EBLIDA and it is coordinated by PL2030. RL:EU started at the end of 2022 and will terminate in 2024.

Why a special issue dedicated to RL:EU? For two reasons: libraries love to share, and libraries are (almost) always short of money. At its core, RL:EU exists with one ultimate aim: to strengthen the resources of libraries.
funded projects create opportunities to learn from others for the benefit of your own library and your community.

The other side of innovation and willingness to provide excellent service to the community is that libraries always need more money than what is available. As European projects come with European funding it creates a wonderful learning opportunity that would not have been there otherwise.

With this knowledge EBLIDA embarked on RL:EU as we are sure that European projects fulfill a need.

Also, we know that libraries are locally oriented as they are community focused and often funded by local government. This orientation makes Europe feel a bit far away and is not helpful to benefit from the opportunities that are there.

A project that creates awareness of these opportunities and delivers practical support to engage in these opportunities is therefore helpful.

That is what we aim for with RL:EU.

To elaborate a bit on the financial part, European grants are provided through a variety of methods, instruments, funding sources. The aim of RL:EU is to share information and to make European librarians aware of these sources so that, at the end of the exercise, more libraries will be able to get access to European funds.

The European Union invests an incredible amount of money. The total investment in EU cohesion policy only – the programme set up to contribute to the strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion and to correcting imbalances between countries and regions - amounts to more than €500 billion (€357 billion by the EU and €158 billion complemented by the Member States).

Your library could have a share of that!

But we are not only in it for the money. Libraries are value driven organisations that do not (primarily) produce economic value but also social value.

The core values of librarianship coincide with the values the European Union to strengthen by their programs and funding.

The Lisbon Treaty states that the European Union "is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."

Whatever the wording in the mission statement of your library , by working in the European context you will be working toward your goals.

Whoever your partners in a European project might be you will be surprised by the similarities in challenges in all countries. And maybe even more surprised by experiences and insights brought to you by colleagues from different – and often less privileged -libraries as these are even more
We are firmly convinced that an increasing number of libraries taking part in European projects will experience an extraordinary boost to the development of libraries in Europe.

EBLIDA strongly encourages Members and non-Members to take part in RL:EU initiatives. This Newsletter will explain why and how.

Keep reading!

Yours sincerely,
Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

2. RL:EU: bridging the gap between libraries and EU funding

Resourcing Libraries in the European Union (RL:EU) is an Erasmus+ funded project coordinated by Public Libraries 2030 (PL2030) in partnership with PiNA and EBLIDA. It aims to address a pressing issue public libraries often face: the lack of knowledge on the funding opportunities offered by the EU and limited expertise on project implementation.

In turn, as public libraries fulfil their roles as adult learning centres in their communities, knowledge and understanding of EU funding programmes is extended into smaller libraries and rural communities, thus bringing important EU topics to the local level.

RL:EU has been organising and implementing a series of activities to achieve its goals, including local events, webinars, coaching and mentoring sessions, as well as a final conference, and an advocacy event. More than sharing knowledge and skills, RL:EU offers a space for dialogue, where topics such as EU citizenship, the importance and awareness of climate change, and concepts of inclusion are brought to local level, therefore increasing libraries' role in bringing EU values to the community and consequently empower society.

Ultimately, RL:EU aims to improve the participation of public libraries in EU funding programmes, resulting in a significant increase of international partnerships and harmonisation of practices and objectives. It also aims to increase the knowledge and confidence of potential partners for EU funding projects.

3. RL:EU invites you to a webinar!

One of the activities RL:EU offers is webinars on the topic of EU funding for libraries.
WEBINAR SERIES: Connecting libraries to EU resources

After a successful first webinar on 7 June, a second session is scheduled for 21 June from 13h to 15h CET.

Join us on 21 JUNE, from 13:00-15:00 CET.
It is free and no registration is needed.

Please use the following Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83609493706

4. RL:EU: an interview with Luca Moltmann from PL2030

Luca Moltmann is Public Libraries 2030’s (PL2030) Project Officer. PL2030 is the coordinator of the RL:EU project.

What inspired you to create RL:EU?

At PL2030, we are working with an amazing network of “lighthouse libraries” across Europe on the overarching topics democracy, sustainability, and digital futures. We meet many inspiring and committed library professionals and get to know plenty of interesting initiatives. We regularly hear - and this is most probably true for the entire socio-cultural and sector and the realm of public (non-formal) education - that public libraries lack the financial and staff capacities to realise many of their ideas for projects, programmes and activities.

On the other hand, through our EU advocacy approach, we are well connected to EU institutions and are able to follow and monitor EU policies and funding programmes relevant to public libraries. We realise that there are many opportunities for public libraries to benefit from EU funding. The RL:EU project aims to contribute to closing this cap: Connecting libraries to EU resources!

Based on your experience, do you believe libraries are less likely to obtain EU funding? If
It depends on the institutions you compare them with… we have noticed that in the cultural and socio-cultural sector, as well as for schools and universities, the necessary expertise, knowledge, and networks to access EU funding have been built over the last couple of years. This may not necessarily be the case for libraries as many of them are still only beginning to look at EU funds. However, they have the same potential to meet criteria for EU project funding. One reason explaining why public libraries are not yet exploring and benefitting from EU funding as they potentially could, is that it requires considerable efforts and resources to unlock and manage EU funds. Often, they don’t know where to start. But this is also true for smaller cultural structures. The European Commission has reacted to these obstacles by simplifying some of the call formats to make them more accessible for smaller structures.

**RL:EU** focuses on training and raising awareness, but networking is also highlighted. What is the role of networking in achieving the project’s goals?

Most of the EU funding programmes, such as Creative Europe or Erasmus+, are targeting projects building on EU wide collaboration. These programmes are intended to help set-up and strengthen European networks. You could say that networking must be part of the RL:EU curriculum because it is part of EU project work. But, of course, there is more behind this idea. With PL2030, we believe that exchange and creating connections is key for growing and learning in public libraries. The participants of our events, gathering library professionals from different countries, always highly appreciate meeting and exchanging with their European colleagues.

**RL:EU** aims to share knowledge and, in a way, teach libraries about EU programmes. What has **RL:EU** taught you?

We are still only halfway through the project... so it is a bit early for general conclusions. I am learning more with every project we implement. **RL:EU** is interesting because we are learning together with libraries, about how they can find a way to access EU funding, build networks and develop project ideas. It is helpful to understand what difficulties public libraries encounter in this process, specifically in relation to their local context. For us, this helps us understand them and their working environment better. You could say that we are learning alongside our network. We are also happy to collaborate with EBLIDA and PiNA in **RL:EU**. We each have our specific strengths and fields of expertise, and are able to learn from each other on this journey!

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**5. RL:EU: an interview with Maja Drobne from PiNA**

Maja Drobne is a Project Manager at PiNA. PiNA is one of the partners of the RL:EU project.

**RL:EU** uses various methods to fulfil its goal of sharing knowledge and understanding. Based on your experience, what is the most effective method to achieve this?

To achieve the goal of sharing knowledge and understanding in **RL:EU**, the most effective method may vary depending on the specific local environment of the libraries we are including in our events. So far, what we saw could be summed up:
Local Events: Local events provide opportunities for libraries to gather and learn from experts and peers. Workshops, seminars, conferences, and panel discussions can facilitate knowledge sharing, networking, and the exchange of best practices.

Coaching and Mentoring Sessions: One-on-one or small group coaching and mentoring sessions can offer personalised guidance and support. This approach allows participants to receive focused attention, ask specific questions, and receive tailored advice based on their unique needs and challenges.

We are also building a Webpage, where all of our results will end, so they will be available for everyone and we are very much looking forward to that.

The project provides a series of local events, coaching and mentoring sessions in the space of 2 years. How will the knowledge continue to be shared after the project ends?

- **Toolkits and Lessons learned**: Creating comprehensive documentation and reports that will summarise the project's findings, collection of Good practices, methodologies, and outcomes can ensure that the knowledge generated during the project is preserved and accessible to interested parties, also web page will still be available. We aim that a lot more librarians will learn how to include EU projects into their daily life and will meet the partners on the way, that will help them to step into the world of EU projects.
- **Training Materials and Guides**: Developing training materials, webinars, guides, and toolkits based on the project's learnings can enable libraries to continue learning and implementing best practices independently.
- **Networking and Communities of Practice**: Encouraging participants to stay connected and maintain communities of practice can foster ongoing knowledge sharing. This can be facilitated through online platforms like E-PANEMA and further, regular meetings, projects, that will become alive.

In your opinion, what else could be done to bridge the gap between libraries and EU funding?

To bridge the gap between libraries and EU funding, the following approaches could be considered:

- **Capacity Building**: Offering training and capacity-building programs specifically designed to educate libraries about EU funding programs, proposal writing, project management, and financial reporting.
- **Improved Communication Channels**: Enhancing communication between libraries and EU funding bodies by providing clear and accessible information about funding opportunities, application processes, and eligibility criteria.
- **Collaboration and Consortia**: Encouraging libraries to form collaborations or consortia to enhance their capacity to apply for and manage EU-funded projects. This approach allows libraries to pool their resources, expertise, and experience.
- **Networking and Partnerships**: Facilitating networking opportunities between libraries and other organisations that have successfully secured EU funding can help libraries learn from their experiences and gain insights into effective strategies.

**RL:EU aims to share knowledge and, in a way, teach libraries about EU programmes. What has RL:EU taught you?**

- To create professional webinars and what it takes to do it
- Learning about so many amazing practices Libraries are doing around Europe
- Met a lot of interesting people along the way
- Motivated me to share more of the knowledge we have in how to put great ideas into practice through EU programmes.
Giuseppe Vitiello is the Director of EBLIDA.

EBLIDA is one of the partners of the RL:EU project.

Why is it important to reach local communities of librarians?

Local communities are the essence of public library work. There are four categories of librarians:

a.) librarians who come to international conferences and are able to implement what is said and discussed when they come back home;

b.) librarians who come to international conferences and are not able to implement what is said and discussed, because of poor political and policy-making conditions at home;

c.) librarians who do not come to international conferences; and

d.) what I would call non-librarians, i.e. cities and regions where there are no libraries.

Normally, library organisations operating at European level work with a), sometimes with b). During the local events we have been able to work with b) and c). In other words, we were able to get out of the traditional scope of international events and reach out to new publics and communities.

Are there specific communities of librarians you are aiming to reach?

Not especially. Library programmes funded by the European Union address all kinds of librarians and libraries. We are proud to see that local events are being organised for librarians working in the capitals and in prominent cities, as well as for librarians working in rural areas, far away from mainstream policy making. The workshop organised in Riga, for instance, included both librarians and city counsellors (20 librarians and 20 city counsellors) – a demonstration that library policymaking at local level linked to European programmes needs support from both professionals and administrators.

The workshops in Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Slovenia were attended by all sorts of librarians since they were linked to major library conferences. On these occasions, librarians have been made aware of library opportunities at European level – exactly the objective of this specific action.

Where does RL:EU fit in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development?

With its 17 goals, 169 sub-goals and 232 indicators, the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development represents the largest and most concrete and effective framework for library operations.

Sustainable development is mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty, article 3, albeit with a focus on economic growth: "sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability and a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress".

The UN Agenda has become part of the current EU work to the point that there are now no less than 25,000 legal instruments (Directives, Decisions, Regulations, Recommendations, Declarations and Resolutions) issued by the European Union which refer to SDGs. SDGs are a transversal objective and a European value; therefore, they are a pre-requisite for all grants...
I would say that RL:EU is the continuation of the EBLIDA commitment towards sustainable development with other, and real, means.

RL:EU aims to share knowledge and, in a way, teach libraries about EU programmes. What has RL:EU taught you?

RL:EU has been a great catalyst for change for EBLIDA. Since we have started working in RL:EU, we have submitted two project proposals to the European Commission and we are currently in the process of submitting two more. We have been able to go beyond EBLIDA's traditional precincts.

We have discovered that, sometimes, the difference between making a dream and for the dream to come true only lays in the time of its implementation.

7. EBLIDA position statement on the Marrakesh Directive

Back in 2016, EBLIDA mobilised its members to influence policy makers at national level on the then proposed Directive. EBLIDA's expert group, EGIL (Expert Group on Information Law), chaired at that time by Barbara Stratton, was central in this action.

In 2017, EBLIDA created a pan-European discussion list called Marrakesh-EU on implementation of the EU Marrakesh legislation in EEA Member States, which intended to share information, intelligence and expertise between library and VIP advocates, experts and organisations in the various Member States.

In 2017 EBLIDA and IFLA jointly published Implementing the Marrakesh Treaty in Europe - A Guide available here and here.

EBLIDA Advocates for Accessible Books:
Marrakesh Directive and European Accessibility Act in Focus

The European Commission is currently evaluating the impact of the Marrakesh Directive and Regulation. Additionally, the evaluation will also consider other policy areas related to the accessibility of published works, particularly the European Accessibility Act.

EBLIDA states that the Marrakesh Directive and Regulation are crucial international regulations in increasing access to books and information for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or have other print disabilities, including persons with dyslexia.

The Marrakesh framework has effectively achieved its main objective, which is to facilitate the cross-border exchange of accessible format copies of copyrighted works, thereby improving access to these works for people with print disabilities worldwide.

Two years after the adoption of the Marrakesh Regulation and Directive, the European Union implemented another important piece of legislation for persons with disabilities: the European Accessibility Act (EAA). The European Accessibility Act is highly valuable and could have a
It is important to note that audiobooks are not within the scope of the EAA. For many individuals with print disabilities, audiobooks are the most suitable book format. To read e-books, a person needs specific technical skills and equipment. For instance, elderly individuals with low technical skills and visual impairments might find it impossible to use and read e-books, whereas an audiobook in CD format is accessible and easy to use for many people. Braille books (on paper) remain an important book format for the blind.

The needs of individuals with print disabilities are diverse, and the Marrakesh Directive acknowledges this diversity of needs. The directive explicitly states that the mandatory exception "also includes changes that might be required in cases in which the format of a work or of other subject matter is already accessible to certain beneficiary persons while it might not be accessible to other beneficiary persons, due to different impairments or disabilities, or the different degree of such impairments or disabilities"

EBLIDA also considers it highly important that authorised entities are not obligated to verify the commercial availability of accessible versions of a work before producing an accessible copy. Such an obligation would significantly impede the operations of authorised entities like libraries and undermine the availability of accessible copies.

While the Marrakesh Directive has brought significant benefits, the goal of reducing duplication in producing accessible format copies across the Union is yet to be fully realised. This coordination of production and avoidance of duplication should be considered for future efforts by the European Union. Establishing a European-funded database to coordinate the production of accessible titles could be a promising initiative.

8. The Torino Library Network and the incoming new Central Library
By Cecilia Cognigni and Michela Pollone

Turin (Torino) is going through a long post-industrial transition, with a constant demographic decline at least since 2015.

The local PA is facing this by increasing the infrastructure availability and quality, both in terms of hard infrastructure (the system of roads, transport, logistics, etc.) and the widespread system of social infrastructure, in which the production of services and the construction of sociality are intertwined.

In this context, Public Libraries represent a fundamental cultural City asset and a driving force for widespread well-being, for the strengthening of skills and a sense of community, for social and cultural welfare.

The municipal library network in Torino includes the Central Library and 18 branch libraries widespread throughout the city, including the Music Library, a service center, some decentralised reading and lending points, two libraries inside the local prison and one at the Juvelin prison, besides the Intercultural Centre and Music Training Centre. The network is complemented by the Bibliobus service, active since 2018 to bring library services to the city areas far from the local libraries premises. There is also an extended proximity network, including school libraries and the
Some projects

In accordance with the IFLA/Unesco Manifesto, Turin Public libraries accomplish the functions of:

- free access to all fields of knowledge with basic dissemination and literacy functions, for all audiences
- lifelong learning to enhance digital, language and reading skills;
- widespread sociality thanks to the organisation of cultural activities, courses, presentations, reading groups, cycle of readings aloud;
- basic information on the public town council services and the whole cultural offer

Moreover, in the Turin Public Libraries, in addition to the reading and lending service for books, multimedia and digital documents, citizens can enjoy a rich range of cultural initiatives free of charge or at calm prices: readings and animation activities, meetings with authors, reading groups and so on. Turin Public Libraries has been acknowledged as “Città che Legge” (Reading City) for 2022-2023 by the National Ministry of Culture and is member of the UNESCO World Book Capital Network.

Some innovation projects are running:

- Turin Public Libraries are the core of the Integrated Urban Plan financed by PNRR (NextgenerationEU) for improving Culture, Participation, and Accessibility in the districts of the City. This Plan provides for the regeneration of green areas around the libraries, improving mobility, renovation of the libraries with digital infrastructure (self check, RFID System) and new furniture. Will open a new Branch Library in the 5th District and two new Bibliobus.
- “Collections at the centre”: evaluation and valorisation of historical and contemporary collections from an integrated and systemic perspective, in partnership with University of Torino, Department of Historical Studies
- “Reading&Machine”: use of artificial intelligence and augmented reality technologies to enhance and enrich the reading experience, in partnership with Politecnico di Torino.
- “Nourishing culture 0-6: project embracing health, social, education. Increasing the number of households reached with CCW proximity actions.

The major running project is the new Central Library, boosting funding from the NRRP-National Recovery and Resilience Plan, by reconverting the Torino Esposizioni building into the City Central Library.

[All images by: SCR, Raphael Moneo and Isolarchitetti]

(Article by Cecilia Cognigni and Michela Pollone)
By Associate Professor Dr. Kalina Ivanova
Director of the Regional Library “P.R.Slaveykov” in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

Under the motto “Traditions, Innovations, Leadership with Mind and Heart” a round table and an exhibition, dedicated to Snejana (Sneja) Ianeva and her life’s work were organised during the week of March 8th, the date of her birth, at our 100 years old Regional Library in the city of Veliko Tarnovo, the ancient capital of Bulgaria.

It has been almost 4 years since Sneja’s untimely passing cut short her inspired volunteer work as the engine of modernisation and democratisation of Bulgarian libraries in the last three decades. She was the President of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association (BLIA) and the Chair of Global Libraries – Bulgaria Foundation for many years. Her contributions, ideas, optimism and dedication to democratic transformation, continue to influence the development of Bulgarian libraries and librarians of all generations. Lessons learned are being used as we move from the pandemic into the post-pandemic challenges for the libraries.

The Round table included librarians and scholars who knew her since the 80’s, when Sneja promoted computers and digitalisation at the library of our oldest university and colleagues who in the last 30 years were encouraged and supported by her to learn the best practices in the world and then successfully implement them at large and small libraries with different traditions and scope of activities. Now they are in leadership positions. The library of Veliko Tarnovo and the smaller libraries in our region are good examples of that.

Our discussions showed that Snejana Ianeva was remarkably successful during very challenging times because the focus of her work were the evolving needs of the people of all ages who use libraries and the ability of librarians to meet those needs at high standards with modern tools. She is also known for her “big heart”. She genuinely cared and warmly communicated on a professional and personal level, and people responded with trust and respect. The opinion of everyone was welcomed and mattered, decisions and actions were the result of open discussions, all Bulgarian libraries and each librarian were important for her, she included and ultimately united all in finding the best possible solutions. She also persuaded International and national cultural, political, legislative, and administrative leaders to become ambassadors for our libraries and provide support. Librarians in over 1,000 Bulgarian libraries remember not only her brilliant mind and organisational skills, but her smile and warmth.

In Europe Snejana Ianeva is known mostly for her international work, which is not the subject of this article. What is less known is her important and very successful volunteer work for the libraries in our country, which reached even the smallest villages and towns. The reason is her modesty and personal style not to seek the spotlight, but to help others shine at local, regional, national, or international events and receive awards. Our Round table concluded that the life’s work of Snejana Ianeva continues to be relevant and inspiring because through an open discussion she helped find the right balance between traditions and innovations and with high professionalism and heart supported the community of librarians to accomplish challenging transformations to digitalisation and democratisation.
Her life-long mission made her a remarkable Bulgarian citizen and European who is known to the world for her accomplishments.

The exhibition about Sneja's contributions was received with great interest and has become a "travelling exhibit" invited by libraries, universities, and schools.

In a couple of pages, it is impossible to give details even for a small part of the enormous work of Snejana Ianeva. You can find many articles and reflections on her national and international activities in the magazine of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association "BLIA Online", published in Bulgarian: issue 1 of February 2020, issue 6 of December 2020, issue 2 of April 2021, and issue 1 of February 2022.

Memories of colleagues, who shared Snejana's enthusiasm in the modernisation and democratisations of contemporary libraries are published online, some with English translation.

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Major library events in 2023

EBLIDA is promoting major library events in your country in 2023.

Please submit your future events for the next edition of the Newsletter here.

Thank you.

05-07 June
Finnish Library Association: Kirjastopäivät (Library Days)
Kuopio, Finland

12-16 June
European Association For Health Information And Libraries (Eahil):
"Radical positive change agents"
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway
https://eahil2023.org/

14-16 June
British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) 2023 Annual Conference:
"Gaining the edge: investing in our skillset"
Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK
https://biall.org.uk/annual-conference/2023-annual-conference-belfast/

27-29 June
10th International Open Science Conference
Online
https://www.open-science-conference.eu/
05-07 July
Liber 2023
Budapest, Hungary
https://liberconference.eu

17-21 July
IASL 2023: Flourishing School Libraries - Research, Policy, and Practice
Rome, Italy
http://www.iasl2023.com

21-25 August
88th IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC):
"Let's work together, let's library"
Hybrid & Rotterdam, Netherlands
https://2023.ifla.org/

29-30 September
BIC - Biblioteche Innovazione Comunità
Bergamo, Italy
http://www.retedellereti.org

09-12 October
8th European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL)
Krakow, Poland
https://ecil2023.ilconf.org/

02-03 November
Der Schweizer Bibliothekskongress 2023
Zürich, Switzerland
https://www.bibliosuisse.ch/aktivitaten/schweizerbibliothekskongress/2023zurich

Please look at the Four good reasons to become EBLIDA member and at the membership fee which varies according to the organisation's turnover and the status of the organisation wishing to join EBLIDA: Full or Associate Member.
For the registration form please fill out the Membership Enquiry Form or contact the Secretariat: eblida@eblida.org

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