Dear Colleagues,

It is a sad start for my editorial: we regret to inform our library community that Dr. Emilia Staneva-Milkova, President of Bulgarian Library and Information Association, BLIA, passed away one week ago. A Member of the Bulgarian Parliament, Emilia was director of the Pencho Slaveykov Regional Library in Varna and a strong supporter of EBLIDA. Only one month ago, I was honoured to open with Emilia the Think The Unthinkable Webinar, jointly organised by EBLIDA and BLIA.

She was an inspirator and innovator and we all keep good memories of the work she has done. On behalf of the EBLIDA community, I would like to express my most sincere condolences to her family and colleagues.
Elections for the newly created IFLA European Regional Division will be held soon and candidates are currently being nominated. A new entity is adding to the already dense network of library entities active at European level - EBLIDA, LIBER, PL 2030, NAPLE, CENL, Sparc Europe, CERL. These are quite a few organisations, et pour cause! All of them are functional to the design of a multinational, multicultural, multilingual Europe. Their dynamism reflects the spectrum and variety of activities carried out by the European Union.

EBLIDA hopes that all members of the IFLA European Regional Division will strive for cooperation among European library organisations and provide impetus for more networking, resource pooling, shared infrastructure, and task-sharing schemes. At least six candidates - known by us - are committed to further cooperation and networking among European library organisations. These candidates are Steen Bording Andersen (Danish Library Association), Frédéric Blin (Association des Bibliothécaires de France), Thomas Gruszkowski (National Library of Poland), Stuart Hamilton (Library Association of Ireland), Hella Klauser (German Library Association) and Stefano Parise (Italian Library Association). They are or have all been active on the European stage.

In 2020, EBLIDA was among the first to publish a report on the state of libraries during the Covid crisis. In an optimistic mood, we considered that Europe could come out of the crisis after Summer 2020 and boldly titled the report: “A post-Covid library agenda”. Unfortunately, the course of the pandemic went against all predictions. Nowadays, the vaccination campaign is moving forward at quick pace and we can reasonably envisage that Europe will soon be out of the tunnel. The title of the EBLIDA report is more than justified now; that is why we are preparing an update which will describe library perspectives with services that were created during the pandemic and will continue to be performed afterwards. The report will be released before Summer 2021.

SDG-KIC (Knowledge and Information Centre) is a brand new product of the EBLIDA Sustainable Development European House. Country by country, it provides information on how European libraries are coping with the implementation of the European 2030 agenda on sustainable development – their policies, flagship projects, tools – and how SDG-oriented library projects are now being prepared and filed for application within the European Union Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027.

In this issue, we present SDG-oriented policies and projects in Denmark and Spain. In the future, we shall illustrate policies and projects in other European states and the strategies library organisations and associations are adopting to implement Think The Unthinkable actions.

Covid is not yet in the past, but we are already tooling up EBLIDA and European libraries to move ahead in the post-Covid age.

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

2. Elections at the IFLA European Regional Division: the six candidates endorsed by EBLIDA

IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, has created a European Regional Division. Candidates for the European Committee are currently being
EBLIDA

hope will reinforce library action in Europe and provide added value to European library organisations active at European level (EBLIDA, LIBER, PL 2030, NAPLE, CENL, Sparc Europe, CERL).

All these organisations are functional to the design of a multinational, multicultural, multilingual Europe. Their dynamism reflects the spectrum and variety of activities carried out by a strong political actor such as the European Union.

Each organisation has a different focus and works on a specific European programme or initiative. For instance, EBLIDA is concentrated on sustainable development and the EU Structural and Investment Funds, LIBER on academic libraries and the Horizon programme, PL 2030 on lighthouse libraries and the EU Democracy Programme, NAPLE on local and governmental library agencies and various EU exchange programmes. All these organisations make attempts to stimulate the advancement of libraries through EU opportunities and to get additional financial support for their members, while trying to diversify their own sources of income. All of them practice advocacy with European institutions for the projects and the activities they carry out.

Library associations and institutions in Europe are now choosing their best candidates for the IFLA European Division Committee. Six of these candidates are committed to further cooperation and networking among library organisations active at European level.

These candidates, all of them being involved in European-oriented library activities, are:

- Steen B. Andersen (Denmark),
- Frédéric Blin (France),
- Thomas Gruszkowski (Poland),
- Stuart Hamilton (Ireland),
- Hella Klauser (Germany) and
- Stefano Parise (Italy).

We hope that, just as the six mentioned candidates will do, all members of the IFLA European Regional Division will strive towards further cooperation among European library organisations and provide impetus for more networking, resource pooling, shared infrastructure and task-sharing schemes.

The EBLIDA Executive Committee

3. A Post-Covid library agenda: the May 2020 report is being updated

In April 2020, EBLIDA launched a survey aimed at detecting measures, practices and services that were initiated during the pandemic.

Released in May 2020, the report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age” was based on the responses forwarded by EBLIDA Members in 17 European countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
In March 2021 EBLIDA has started the process of updating the report. The new survey includes seventeen questions and has been divided into five parts, following the structure of the May 2020 report:

1. Exponential social distancing: a well-connected two-meter library;
2. Technologies are mutating and shaping libraries in new ways;
3. Uncharted economic territory: review the library budget composition;
4. Library governance at central and local levels;
5. Do not forget the climate change opportunity and threat.

In May 2020, in an optimistic mood, EBLIDA considered that the Covid-19 crisis would not last more than a semester and that it was time to think of an exit strategy. At that time, EBLIDA's aims were to closely monitor library developments in European libraries. During the crisis, libraries created platforms and special webpages and worked to diversify their services. Libraries expanded their services and organised foodbanks in towns, distributed safety equipment like soap and masks, provided services to children staying at home and established contact with elderly patrons through chats.

Looking at the experiences running in many countries, we saw that reaching out to people and yet, keeping them at an appropriate and safe physical distance, is possible. This depth of experience will not be lost in the long-term. The world is facing hard times but together libraries can build upon this legacy. Most likely, there will also be long-term implications for libraries and they will be first and foremost of a financial nature.

Today, the virus is still with us; most likely forecasts envisage that European countries will reach herd immunity by Autumn 2021. Nevertheless, as nations begin slowly returning to normality, libraries need to follow new health regulations and safety practices; re-opening means focusing on new “library normals”.

Have the five “new” normals we described in the May 2020 report become “ordinary” normals? To what extent have library activities and trends, that were considered “extraordinary” effort at the time of the Covid, become permanent in the post-Covid 19 age? The 2021 survey will validate / not validate the conclusions drawn in the 2020 report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age”. Its ultimate objective is to assist European libraries in dealing with the post-Covid 19 age.

The updated report, released before Summer 2021, will be widely distributed and accessible on the EBLIDA website.

4. Focus on SDG-KIC (Sustainable Development Goals – Knowledge and Information Centre)

What is SDG-KIC?

EBLIDA is pleased to introduce the EBLIDA SDG-KIC.

SDG-KIC describes how the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development is applied in libraries at national level.
with a view to helping them implement SDGs in libraries, SDG-KIC is the companion tool of EBLIDA Matrix: while the second is Europe-wide and thematically oriented on policies, projects, opportunities for funding, etc., SDG-KIC is country-oriented and provides for examples of fundraising, advocacy and policy setting at national level.

Both tools describe policies together with projects and how they are realised.

In this Newsletter issue, we focus on two national cases:

1) **Denmark:** libraries and how they become part of a voluntary national review
2) **Spain:** a Working Group in charge of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

**Denmark - libraries and voluntary national review 2021**

Without a doubt the most visited cultural institution in Denmark (37.4 million visits in 2019, [https://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/kultur-og-kirke/biblioteker/folkebiblioteker](https://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/kultur-og-kirke/biblioteker/folkebiblioteker)), public libraries are the natural focal point for citizens when it comes to civic engagement, access to knowledge, facts and news. Denmark strives to be a pioneer in sustainability, climate resilience and the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda. Currently, more than half of Danish Public Libraries are involved in SDG activities according to official statistics (DS 2019). Four projects are described below.

The first is the national **DB2030** Network of the Danish Library Association, an informal network now counting more than 210 members with a strong 2030 focus on the work of public libraries in Denmark, addressing the organisation of the library itself and municipalities, local schools and other institutions as well as local associations and individual citizens (SDGs 4, 11, 16 and 17).

The second is the World’s Best Solutions Live! A project set up by Ballerup public libraries in 2019 consisting of a two day festival on sustainable development. The library built up Cube satellite models sessions together with citizens and students from the local high school. 400 students attended the first day of the festival. On day two of the festival, 250 citizens, volunteers, staff, keynote speakers and contributors spent a day eating together, talking and learning about SDG goals. Locally promoted through social and traditional media, this Festival, which is replicated every year, represents an opportunity for local students and citizens to get access to products and devices that are SDG-compliant. The offer includes: lunch from the local organic farm, purchasing SDG hats made by children, music from the music school and local citizens collecting rubbish outside the library. Celebrities present their green agenda, with presentations about plastic in the oceans, sustainable clothes and much more. In 2019, satellite sessions were developed by PLIX - Public Library Innovation Exchange (MIT) and citizens had the opportunity to understand how we monitor the globe from space - ice melting, deforestation and so on (SDGs 4, 11 and 17).

The Svendborg Bibliotek has become a certified Sustainable Business Partner based on the following focus points:

- To be a sustainable workplace
- To be a house of knowledge and development of sustainability
- To have healthy, competent and creative employees.

Sustainability means a conversion of library functions: in Swedenborg, the public library is working on transforming the green areas surrounding the library into a giant buffet for insects, and an outdoor space for contemplation, mental health, well-being and much more (SDG 3, 4 –12 and...
The SDG Library conceived by the Aarhus Public Libraries is an expansion of the library space and the library DNA based on “circularity” of trust, equality, recycling and co-creation. The SDG Library Aarhus Public Libraries are co-creating spaces with partners and citizens that will hold a living indoor/outdoor library where partners, citizens, children, schools, universities, NGOs, local clubs meet and share tools, knowledge and information with a view to turning SDGs into everyday-life applications.

Physical spaces are constructed using recycled materials for which money has been collected through crowdfunding. The indoor library includes shared tools, spaces for reflection, meetings, networking and rooms for building, creating and tinkering. The outdoor library is a community stage: anyone can get to the stage for theatre, concerts, stand up or use the frame for displaying visual art. The stage provides free and equal access to expression and art as a tool for SDG-action. The outdoor library also presents a community space – an ancient construction of stones in a circle shaded by trees. This space provides equal access to dialogue and community as a tool for SDG-action. These are all practical examples on how the Agenda 2030 becomes an SDG Toolbox for the community (11 and 17, as well as other combined SDGs).

Read more about SDGs & Danish libraries in the Voluntary National SDG Review 2021 - Denmark here.

Spain – the implementation of the 2030 Agenda Working Group

In 2017, the Consejo de Cooperación Bibliotecaria (CCB) – including representatives from the Regions (Comunidades autónomas), the Ministry of Culture and FESABID - set up a Working Group in charge of elaborating a library policy for Spain in relation to the Agenda 2030. First steps included a permanent collaboration with the High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda in Spain and the organisation of awareness activities in various Comunidades.

Best practices were selected with a special eye on:

a) the social function of libraries and
b) the collection of data which may support the implementation of SDGs in Spanish libraries.

The Spanish Strategy on SDGs, elaborated by CCB, identified five strategic areas for development:

1. Increase library visibility and their contribution to personal development, social well-being and sustainable development. Six SDGs were identified as being more profitable for library development: Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reducing Inequality), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).
2. Guarantee access to information, culture and knowledge to all. Through Library mapping and indicators, CCB wished to offer a solution to the uneven development of the Spanish Library System and the lack of appropriate reporting systems.
3. Design, plan and provide new services having in mind the perspective of the 2030 Agenda, in terms of library development, collections, reference products and service organisation.
4. Re-modeling, generating and exploiting data for a proper evaluation of SDG-oriented library projects through more accurate and re-usable data. Impact studies should analyse the effect of library projects on the society, institutions and individuals.

In the 3rd CCB Strategic Plan 2019-2023, 5 action lines are targeted at:

1. Users and the public as a whole. By putting citizenship at the centre of library services the gender perspective is applied in relation to collections, activity planning and service organisation.
3. Library visibility. The gender perspective is applied through service design, the communication of library’s added value and alliances made with the Third sector.
4. Digital citizenship through open Access, better access to information and resources and to the library cultural heritage as a common good.
5. Better functioning of the CCP, as a coordination centre and an influential body.

This Strategy, formulated by CCP, has been accepted by the Comunidades autónomas as a broad framework. It is up to them, now, to transform strategy into policies and policies into action. More about Spanish libraries implementing SDG policies and strategies [here](#).

### 5. EBLIDA Day, Friday 11th June 2021

We are looking forward to a full day dedicated to EBLIDA on **Friday, 11th of June 2021**.

The **EBLIDA Council Meeting** will be held from 10:00 until 13:00, for the second time, fully online.

The Council is open to our members only and this year, we will elect a new Executive Board. Over the coming days and weeks, our members can expect to receive important information on nominations, proxy and the elections process. The newly elected Executive Board will have their first meeting directly after the Council meeting.

The morning Council meeting will be followed in the afternoon, by an event **open to all**, on EBLIDA’s Think the Unthinkable work.

More information, including the programme will be available on this very soon through our newsletter and social media platforms. Keep an eye out in next editions newsletter, to be published on Thursday, **14th of May, 2021**.

### 6. Obituary Dr. Emilia Staneva-Milkova, President of BLIA, Bulgaria

On behalf of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association, it is with a great sadness that we would like to inform you that Dr. Emilia Staneva-Milkova, President of the Governing Board of **BLIA**, passed away on March 31st, 2021.

Dr. Staneva was involved with BLIA for over 30 years. She started her career as a librarian in the Children Books' Department of the Regional Library “Dora Gabe” in Dobrich. In 1992 she moved to the Reference Department of Regional Library “Pencho Slaveykov” – Varna where in 1998 she was promoted to library director.
For more than 20 years under her leadership, the Library underwent an astonishing transformation and became one of the leading public libraries in Bulgaria introducing innovative services. In 2005 Dr. Milkova introduced her idea of the initiative “National Reading Marathon”, a nation-wide campaign promoting reading and literacy. She integrated the Regional Library “Pencho Slaveykov” – Varna into Europeana as a major aggregator of content from Bulgaria’s side. Emilia was a member of the Public Libraries Standing Committee of IFLA from 2013 – 2017. She had a number of specializations in the United States and Germany.

For the last four years she has been a member of the 44th National Assembly and a member of the Committee of Culture and Media at the Bulgarian Parliament. As an MP and President of BLIA, she passionately represented the libraries’ interests and sought to explore new ways of proclaiming the reading. With her positive and decision-oriented personality, Emilia Milkova successfully persuaded national and local authorities in supporting and sustaining the position of the libraries in the country.

Emilia Staneva is leaving a distinguished legacy to our professional community and will remain a noble example for ethics, professional fellowship and humanitarian contribution.

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EBLIDA Members, colleagues and friends wishing to send messages of condolences and tributes to Emilia may address them to: Mrs. Radka Kalcheva, Regional Library “Pencho Slaveykov” – Varna, Bulgaria, email address: office@libvar.bg. She will then pass them on to Emilia’s family or to staff as appropriate.

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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Events and Dates

April 12
Central services for public libraries
Place: Online event
Organizer: FOBID and Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID)

April 14-16
DTCE - 1st International Online Conference on Digital Transformation in Culture and Education
April 15-16
*CILIP Ireland/Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Annual Joint Conference 2021*
Place: Online event  
Organizer: CILIP Ireland/Library Association of Ireland (LAI)

April 19-22
*LI DA 2021 - LIBRARIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE*
Place: Dubrovnik, Croatia  
Organizer: Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA)

April 20
*DigitALL Public conference: Working to make our lives better*
Place: Online event  
Organizer: European Commission

April 26
*UCL Open Science Conference 2021*
Place: Online event  
Organizer: UCL

April 28
Think The Unthinkable Webinar for Italian libraries  
Place: Online event  
Organizer: Italian Library Association (AIB), Rete delle Reti and EBLIDA

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**About the Newsletter**

**Responsible for the Newsletter:** Giuseppe Vitiello  
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**Editors:** Unless otherwise specified, all articles are written by the EBLIDA Secretariat.

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