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.

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President’s Editorial

I am often asked why European library associations and institutions should join EBLIDA. My simple answer is: because by being an EBLIDA Member, you facilitate EBLIDA to create value for libraries in Europe; value that individual libraries and associations cannot raise in an international and complex environment where individual libraries or associations are not active.

Today, my statement is proven by evidence, as never before. November 2022 has been the harbinger of good news for libraries coming from European institutions and with far reaching long-term impacting decisions. This month will very likely be remembered as the Golden Month for European librarianship. And EBLIDA has played an important role in these developments.
On 24th November, Giuseppe Vitiello, EBLIDA Director, presented the draft Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe at the CDCPP of the Council of Europe. CDCPP is the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape responsible for activities related to these fields and for following-up on their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

This was the last technical step of the formal process the Recommendation has to go through. After this step, the Recommendation will be approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, represented by the Permanent Representatives of 46 Member States.

One week later, on November 29, the Council of the European Union issued a Council resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, which includes libraries as a priority area in the action of the European Commission. It is the first time, after 21 years, that a European program specifically refers to libraries.

Both topics will be presented during the 31st EBLIDA Conference and 2nd EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 Event, which take place in Luxembourg, at the National Library, on 18-19 April 2023. A rich program is offered, with a balance of theoretical issues and careful attention to library practices, and a mix of voices from the civil society and (library) professionals, panel sessions and moments of interaction.

The bottom line of the conference, and its most resonant message, is that libraries are not self-referential institutions; they interact with their community. They reflect the needs of these communities and of the people they serve. As can be seen in their mission statements democratic values and sustainable development goals also inspire the objectives they pursue, the operations they carry out, the methodologies and technologies they adopt. In this way they are not ‘neutral’ and exert influence on people, underline diversity and create pre-requisites for the integration of minorities. In all their endeavors – from lifelong learning to digital literacy, from social cohesion to cultural heritage - they give a concrete meaning to the local appearance of the common European identity.

We call it: the “soft power” of libraries - a gentle but persistent pledge for action towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society. With stronger libraries, a Europe that is stronger, cohesive and closer to its citizens becomes more within reach.

I take this opportunity to wish all Readers merry Christmas and a happy 2023!

And do not forget to Register for the EBLIDA Conference website.

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President
2. The EBLIDA 31st Conference “Who is afraid of library power? Empowering citizens for a democratic and sustainable society

Library power will be reviewed in all its forms and aspects during the EBLIDA Conference in Luxembourg (18th April 2022).

- Registration is now open!

Libraries have a vision, a mission, and goals. They work with communities and open new directions. Through target selection, they orient their projects towards precise social objectives; they choose the publics they serve – often with special attention for people who have no means to access knowledge and for those left behind. They are actors in society in the broadest sense of the word, although they are not linked to any political party.

The 31st EBLIDA Conference is largely dominated by the two major events that will be shaping library development in the years to come: the Council of Europe / EBLIDA Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe and the Library Action within the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. High-level officials of the Council of Europe and the European Commission will attend the EBLIDA Conference and explain the long-term implications of these two initiatives.

Libraries are strong institutions if they are not neutral; if they commit themselves to social engagement and if they are able to let emerge an active citizenship open to social interaction and dialogue. They must also be prepared to take up unforecastable challenges as the Covid crisis and, nowadays, the war in Ukraine.

In the Luxembourg Conference, these issues will be explored in the morning through three workshops:

a) Libraries as strong institutions;
b) Active citizenship in libraries and

c) Are libraries well prepared to face socio-economic and security challenges?
d) How can we use SDGs to reinforce library power?
e) Empowering citizens through digital literacy;
f) The European e-lending Summit.

Here is the complete programme:

9:00-9:40: Welcome session and Keynote speeches

First Part: Round Table: What is the essence of library power?

9.40-10:40: Chair: Ton van Vlimmeren (EBLIDA)
Keynote speech: What is the essence of library power?

10:40-11:10: Creating connections around a cup of coffee

11:10-12.20: Three workshops

Workshop 1: Libraries as strong institutions
Workshop 2: Active citizenship in libraries
Workshop 3: Are libraries well prepared to face socio-economic and security challenges?

12:20-12:30: Conclusions of the morning
12:30-14:15: Light lunch

Second Part: Policies for, around and within libraries

14:15-15:30: Chair: Ms Hella Klauser, Deputy-President, EBLIDA
The Council of Europe/EBLIDA draft Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe
14:30-15:00: The future of library policies in Europe

15:00-15:30: Success stories / Failure stories
15:30-16:00: Creating connections around a cup of coffee

16:00-16:20: Sponsors’ corner

16:20-17:30: Three workshops: Policies within and around libraries
Workshop 4: How can we use SDGs to reinforce library power?
Workshop 5: Empowering citizens through digital literacy
Workshop 6: The European e-lending Summit

17:30-17:40: Conference evaluation (orchestrated by Ms Sophie Felfoldi, EBLIDA)

17:40-17:45: Conclusions (Mr Ton van Vlimmeren, EBLIDA)

20:00 - Conference dinner

3. Giuseppe Vitiello, Director EBLIDA, presents the draft Recommendation of Library legislation and policy in Europe before
Extract from the speech held in Strasbourg by Giuseppe Vitiello:

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, is the largest European intergovernmental organisation. It includes 46 Member States and is specialised in human rights, democracy and the rule of the law.

In January 2000, the Council of Europe released the Council of Europe/EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe. These Guidelines have been highly influential in shaping policies and inspiring library-related legislation throughout the Council of Europe Member States.

Cultural and societal changes on the one hand, and technological developments on the other, are challenging libraries in new ways. In the last two decades, libraries have evolved as an enriching space for human interaction, knowledge creation and civic engagement. In several Council of Europe states library legislation already reflects these new concepts and roles in compliance with a good number of Council of Europe and European Union documents and recommendations.

The need for revising and updating the 2000 Guidelines was therefore cogent. It is the reason why, in 2022, an ad hoc EBLIDA Working Group and the Council of Europe Secretariat jointly started to work again on this instrument. The text of the Recommendation defines libraries as “publicly accessible institutions of a cultural, educational and social nature that serve local, academic, specialised communities and/or society at large.”

In 2000, the Group of experts identified four sections; the current draft Recommendation has five sections: Freedom of expression, free access to information and democratic participation, Libraries within the framework of the European agenda on sustainable development, Global and local threats and library operations, Digital transformation and the expansion of Artificial Intelligence-based library networks, Copyright and the protection of library heritage.

Experts have added a full sub-section dedicated to “democratic participation” to those parts dedicated to “Freedom of expression and free access to information.”. Why? Because freedom of expression and free access to information are empty concepts if they are not embodied in active citizenship, in people’s interaction and dialogue. And because the fight to fake news and the role of libraries as democratic institutions were not fully addressed in the previous Guidelines. To give an example, article 1 of the Norwegian Library Act, approved in 2013, states that “The public libraries shall be an independent meeting place and arena for public discussion and debate.”

Why do libraries need a legislative framework for their action? Because public libraries are largely funded by municipalities and therefore there is a need to build up an architecture where local provisions are included, in order to avoid that different or, even worse, contrasting directions are addressed. If libraries are nowadays the leading public cultural facility, it is because they seamlessly operate across cultural, educational and social contexts.

The Council of Europe / EBLIDA draft Recommendation brings about a revolution in the library world. The leap forward lies in the title of its second section, where library work is framed within the European agenda 2030 on sustainable development and its related sustainable development goals. Librarians
have experimented how relevant and important it is to refer to SDGs during the last two emergencies: the Covid crisis and the war in Ukraine. Before Covid, the success of library performances was measured by analysing data related to the number of visits. This changed during Covid over the course of a few weeks. Libraries and their communities went into lockdown, with libraries now offering online services and access to online books and informational content. The digital public library has grown prosperous during the last two years, e-lending has soared, and the so called “social library” – for instance, health information, relief to citizens and all kinds of social activities dedicated to migrants and people left behind – has known an unexpected boom. Libraries have shown themselves to be an essential infrastructure of a sustainable society.

Hence the need to add two new sections in the draft recommendation, which were not present in the 2000 Guidelines: “Global and local threats and library operations” and “Digital transformation and the expansion of Artificial Intelligence-based library networks”. Neither section is designed to predict the future, which is by nature unpredictable; they aim to raise the level of library resilience in the face of unprecedent challenges, to resort to B plans when needed, and to manage new technologies and artificial intelligence.

The last section of the draft recommendation “Copyright and the protection of library heritage” takes into account the new Directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market approved by the European Union in 2019.

It is hard to speculate about the future of a legislative instrument. We are confident, however, that, as was the case for the Guidelines in 2000, the Council of Europe Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe will be highly influential and will continue to shape library activities for the next twenty years.

4. A Library Programme within the European Commission activities for culture

The Council of the European Union is a body where all 27 Member States are represented. It has an intergovernmental nature and meets in different configurations of 27 national ministers. The Council of the European Union issued a Council resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, in which “culture is seen as an integral element in sustainable development and positive societal transformation.”

The Council agreed on the following overarching priorities:

a) Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors;
b) Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society;
c) Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture;
d) Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations.

Here is the complete text of the section of the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 which is dedicated to libraries.

**Building bridges: strengthen the multiple roles of libraries as gateways to and transmitters of...**
Working methods: OMC group; workshops; conference.

Rationale: Libraries play a key role in Europe's democratic, social, cultural, and educational landscape at all levels. They make a significant contribution to building democracy, citizen engagement and public-participation activities across the EU, including in rural and remote areas, including the outermost regions. They welcome diverse groups, develop programmes and activities reflecting current societal challenges, and provide access to pluralist and reliable information and diverse cultural content in safe and accessible environments. They are essential gateways to local and indigenous data, knowledge, research and culture.

Target outputs: Starting a comprehensive debate and explore fields for promoting and strengthening libraries; identifying different dimensions and areas with potential, and exploring funding lines under EU programmes; bringing together policy makers and library professionals; explore possibilities for training and further activities for professionals.

5. EBLIDA is recruiting a Project Officer!

For its activities revolving around sustainable development in libraries, e-lending and library legislation as well as assistance to members, EBLIDA is seeking to recruit a part time position of Project Officer (PO, 0,6 FTE, possibly evolving into a full time position as long as EU-funded projects are approved).

The contract is valid for one year and will be renewed in response to business needs and demands. Secondments from institutions of EBLIDA Member States are highly encouraged.

You will find the complete Vacancy Notice here.

6. Major library events in Europe in 2023

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

If your event is not listed below then please fill in the form here.

Thank you!
BOBCATSSS 2023
Hybrid & Oslo, Norway
https://www.oslomet.no/en/about/events/bobcatss-2023

09-10 February
Association of Danish Library Managers
Billund, Denmark
https://bibchef.dk/aarsmoede/

18-19 April
31st EBLIDA Council & Conference and 2nd EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 Event
*Who is afraid of library power? Empowering citizens for a democratic and sustainable society*
Luxembourg
https://eblida2023.sciencesconf.org/

27-28 April
Danish Library Association
Odense, Denmark
https://db.dk/events/det-bibliotekspolitiske-topmoede-2023/

02-05 May
Österreichische Bibliothekskongress:
"Arbeitswelten – Realitäten und Visionen"
Hybrid & Kongresszentrum
Innsbruck, Austria
https://www.uiib.ac.at/congress/bibliothek2023/

03-05 May
14th Congress of our Association BAD
Algarve, Portugal
https://eventos.bdad.pt/14congresso/

14-16 May
Next Library
Hybrid & Aarhus, Denmark
https://www.nextlibrary.net/

18-19 May
XII Congress of the Estonian Librarians:
"Libraries are the future"
Viimsi, Estonia

23-26 May
111. Bibliothekartag
Hannover, Germany
https://bibliothekartag2023.de/

30 May - 3 June
15th Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference (QQML2023): “Library as a promoter of democracy and active citizenship”
Hybrid & Heraklion, Crete, Greece
http://qqml.org

05-07 June
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://bial.org.uk/annual-conference/2023-annual-conference-belfast/

05-07 July
Liber 2023
Budapest, Hungary
https://liberconference.eu

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/

7. British Library - International Library Leaders Programme
19-23 July 2023

The British Library will be running a week-long intensive professional development course for mid-career library and archive professionals, 12-19 July 2023.

The International Library Leaders Programme offers a unique opportunity to go behind the scenes at one of the world’s largest national libraries, with workshops, talks and tours given by senior staff from across the Library’s core departments and functions.

The programme ran in 2019 and – after a pandemic pause – again in 2022, bringing together
https://www.bl.uk/projects/ILLP, where you can download the brochure and apply. The deadline for applications is 27 February 2023.

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

Events and Dates in December 2022

December 13
Bibliothèques et handicap : comment identifier les besoins ?
Place: Reims, France
Organizer: Bibliothèque publique d'information

December 14
XIX Serbian Library Association Conference, Belgrade, 14-16 December 2022
Place: Belgrade, Serbia
Organizer: Serbian Library Association

About the Newsletter

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Editors: Unless otherwise specified, all articles are written by the EBLIDA Secretariat.

Stay informed, Sign up today!
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