Over the past two years librarians and EBLIDA friends have longed for normality. They experienced an intense desire to stay together, to meet in person, to visit libraries. They nurtured an equally deep willingness to come back to business as usual: the pleasure of connecting hand to hand, starting projects with a hand shake and thinking beyond ordinary horizons around a cup of coffee.
With the EBLIDA Conference “Ready to take off: libraries commitment towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society” and the EBLIDA – NAPLE - PL2030 joint event (Athens, 15-16 June 2022) we are back to shaking hands, to meeting in person and visiting libraries. We convene in Athens after two years of online meetings and haggard eyes in front of a computer. We go from virtual to real life. It is a feast, a celebration – we are ushering in a post-Covid era.

And now with the war in Ukraine, we are reminded that another emergency is looming at the horizon, with much relevance to library work. Relevant, why? Because democracy and sustainable development in libraries are not empty words, but form pillars of peace and prosperity; because libraries are open spaces of dialogue and reconciliation; and because equal access to information can only develop in a world where each citizen is given equal opportunities and a chance for personal development.

In spite of a harmful virus and the distant roar of cannons and artillery, the library world continues to conjure up ideas of a democratic, sustainable and equitable society. The price of oil and gas is rocketing – we desperately need alternative and renewable energy sources. Never before has access to accurate information for all been so precious – this is why we need equitable societies. The world is running short on democracy – and this reinforces the role of libraries as democratic institutions.

What may once have seemed accessory objectives are now the current framework of library development. Beyond the old and new normals, besides what is ordinary and what is considered extra-ordinary business, a true library normality means, first and foremost, to stay close to people during difficult times, to align with real life and with those who cannot, and should not be left behind. All normal libraries are therefore committed towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society.

Register with the EBLIDA Conference on 15th June and the EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 join event. Come to Athens to see how libraries are working their post-Covid agenda!

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

2. What are the objectives of the EBLIDA Conference “Ready to take off: libraries commitment towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society” (Athens, 15 June 2022)

EBLIDA is celebrating its 30th birthday in 2022. What better way to celebrate EBLIDA’s anniversary than by creating new library concepts, exchanging best practices and participating in a general initiative aimed at new library achievements in Europe.

Never before has an EBLIDA Conference programme has been so rich, with 30 speakers/chairs coming from many countries and selected among the prominent initiators of leading library initiatives in Europe. And never before there has been a special event, like the one jointly
The EBLIDA Conference is pursuing three objectives.

First, we will demonstrate that sustainable development goals are now the central framework in many libraries. Through abundant exemplification and the description of pathbreaking, vibrant experiences, we wish to illustrate this new normality in libraries.

Second, we wish to submit to the scrutiny of external experts the considerable amount of documents, reports, guides and guidelines EBLIDA has produced in the last two years. It is time to take stock of EBLIDA’s work in the fields of sustainable development, democracy and equal access to information. EBLIDA SDG-oriented products are widely known in the library community: two European reports on SDGs and libraries, a Guide and a Tutorial focused on the European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027 as possible funding sources. And, first and foremost, two constantly updated EBLIDA tools: the EBLIDA Matrix, which aims to identify SDG-relevant EU programmes and how library projects can meet SDGs, and the EBLIDA SDG-KIC, where SDG-oriented library policies at national level are identified and described.

During the Conference, EBLIDA is honoured to present two brand new products to library colleagues and friends:

- the draft Council of Europe / EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe, which illustrates the EBLIDA commitment towards a democratic society;
- the First European Report on e-lending, including a description and assessment of e-lending transactions and models in nine European countries, which shows EBLIDA’s commitment towards an equitable society.

Third, the EBLIDA Conference and the EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 joint event are an extraordinary opportunity for libraries to trigger new initiatives and common projects. We are in the early stages of European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027; this EBLIDA Conference is an occasion for sharing views and tips on how to present proposals within this framework.

These events will take place in the extraordinary venue of the Goethe-Institut in Athens – a perfect space to assess how libraries are the new “agoras” of the 21st century.

3. EBLIDA – NAPLE - PL2030 joint event
(Athens, 16 June 2022)
by Ilona Kish

After having worked together on an informal basis for years, on 24th February 2022 EBLIDA – NAPLE and Public Libraries 2030 announced a pooling of resources and efforts to strengthen library work in Europe. This initiative brings together over 60 European library services and 68 national library bodies to create a stronger presence for European libraries and closer cooperation in a Europe that is now more connected than ever.
The joint session by EBLIDA–NAPLE and Public Libraries 2030 aims to launch the cooperation initiative and to create common ground for future activities. We want to deepen common understanding and expertise and to think about the next steps to take.

The first Table Talk is dedicated to the joint EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 initiative for Ukraine. Following the 24th February European Declaration condemning the barbaric attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, EBLIDA-NAPLE-PL2030 launched the Libraries for Refugees website with an important “How to help” section broken down by country. Table Talk on Ukraine, chaired by Giuseppe Vitiello, will host a series of lightning talks igniting the debate around the responsibility of libraries in providing services for refugees. Uncomfortable issues will also be discussed concerning war, misinformation and librarians’ attitudes.

The second Table Talk is dedicated to Library Advocacy. There are several library organisations active at European level, each with their own identity and objectives. We wish to debate about the setting up of a permanent Forum where the policies and objectives of these organisations, even if not perfectly aligned, are contributing to the prosperity and the vitality of the library construction in Europe. We also wish to examine how we can build up a methodology based on cooperation and a savvy repartition of tasks of European library organisations. During the Workshop, PL2030 will present the joint recommendations of EBLIDA, NAPLE, PL2030 for the new EU Work Plan for Culture. We invite you to join us to exchange and engage around current challenges of the European library sector and to explore how we can strengthen the position of public libraries together.

At the end of the working sessions, meetings specific to each organisation will be held. PL2030 will discuss future 2022-2023 initiatives dealing with: Advocacy plan, EU training and Lighthouse Libraries clusters. The first in person meeting of EBLIDA Expert Groups is open to the public and will concern e-lending in Europe. EBLIDA’s concept of sustainable copyright and methodological issues emerging from the First European Report on E-lending in Public Libraries will be discussed. In the third session, future NAPLE activities will be planned.

4. Session 1: Library commitment towards the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development
by Ton van Vlimmeren

EBLIDA has a long-lasting commitment towards the attainment of the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development.

EBLIDA’s approach is:

a) European;
b) project-oriented; and
c) looking for new funding opportunities.

Professor Despina Anagnostopoulou, and Anastasia Psallida, University of Macedonia, Greece, will provide the state of the art of the 2030 agenda on sustainable development, with an emphasis on EU-promoted SDG 16 and the need for cooperation and collaboration in libraries (SDG17).
Programmes at Ministry of Development and Investments, Greece will inform participants on current developments of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027. While Greece has already signed an agreement with the European Commission, agreements in other countries, like France and Italy, are expected to be finalised in Autumn 2022.

**Rauha Maarno**, Director of Customer relations, Accessibility Library Celia, Finland Libraries, will show how the political context and the urban development make the difference in library development.

The renewal of city identity is often supported through European Structural and Investment Funds, as the examples of the cities of Berlin and Espoo clearly illustrate.

**Veronica Ceruti**, Director library system, city of Bologna, Italy, will outline the ambitious project set up by the city of Bologna and how the generous funding provided by ESIF has been determinant to achieve the SDGs Bologna is pursuing.

**Guillaume Gast**, Head Médiathèque Nord, Strasbourg, France, will outline the small, but well-targeted project of the city of Montreuil, where relapse into illiteracy as an SDG was fought with funding provided by ESIF.

**Spaska Tarandova**, Director Global Libraries Foundation, Bulgaria, will outline the integration of heritage libraries into the Danube Cultural Routes, explaining how cultural heritage can pursue SDGs through funding provided by ESIF.

5. Workshop 1: **Sustainable development and public libraries**
by Mairead Owens

The aim of the workshop is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to illustrate case studies describing the diversified framework of SDG applications in libraries.
Katrina Kukaine, Head, R&D, National Library of Latvia, will report about the 2nd EBLIDA European report on sustainable development and libraries, which provides numerous project experiences and a broad range of SDG-oriented policies throughout Europe.

The other aim of the Workshop is to examine whether a policy, or different policies, can be detected which aim to assist libraries in attaining SDGs. Participants in the workshop will compare policies and will reflect on how to apply them to specific national situations.

After a 10 minute presentation of the EBLIDA 2nd European Report on sustainable development and libraries with an emphasis on the diversity of SDG-oriented projects, participants will break into small groups. Since projects listed in the report may be source of inspiration, one or more case studies will be examined with a view to proposing ideas for projects at national / European level. Policies will also be discussed, aiming to identify possible ways of assisting libraries in pursuing relevant SDGs.

6. Workshop 2: Sustainable development and university libraries by Giannis Tsakonas

Are SDGs an exclusively public library business? It does not look so. Apart from giving voice to university libraries actively pursuing SDGs, the aim of this workshop is to demonstrate that SDGs are fully implemented in university libraries and several policies can be actively set up, depending on the relation that university libraries have with their own territory.

Hana Landová, Director, University Library of Life Science, Prague, Czech Republic will report about university projects present in the 2nd EBLIDA European report on sustainable development and libraries and will demonstrate that all three pillars of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development – environmental, social, economic – are pursued in university libraries. Projects vary from citizen science initiatives, linking universities with their own territory, to activities aimed to fill the gender gap.

After the welcome and introduction, workshop participants introduce themselves and are split into groups to discuss the SDGs included in university/research library projects and share their
participants will identify the connections and synergies that should be developed between university/research libraries and public libraries in order to further promote SDGs. The session will be concluded by the moderator with some remarks and lessons learned.

7. Workshop 3: **Sustainable development and fundraising**

by Eléonore Clavreul

"**Think The Unthinkable (TTU). A post-Covid European library policy meeting sustainable development goals to be funded through European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027**" is a programme set up by EBLIDA which has involved six countries so far. Through input provided by participating countries and, especially, preparatory action undertaken at national level, the workshop will illustrate the most appropriate strategy for approaching and using European Structural Funds for libraries.

The Italian implementation of TTU (Coordinator: Rete delle Reti, AIB) is presented by Anna Bernabè, University of Ferrara / AIB-Italian Library Association. From mid-January to end March RDR and AIB organised no less than 10 workshops, each of them including 4-6 sessions. Some 120 people were trained as agents of change on issues such as Green Library (also Green Literacy), digitalising collections and web archiving, digital communities and citizen science, smart data, social and territorial cohesion, work and occupational growth. Next step is a one-year strategy culminating in the presentation of several library projects under ESIF.

The French TTU implementation aims to create narrow links between project implementers and officials in charge of ESIF. The workshop will encourage exchange of experiences and preparation of ESIF projects.

This workshop will encourage exchange of experiences and preparation of ESIF projects. The Chair will split participants into sub-groups. They will be informed about multiple aspects of the European Structural and Investment Funds with a view to identifying possible areas of intervention in this field.

8. Session 2: **Topic 2: Library commitment towards democracy**

by Zélia Parreira
The Chair will introduce the draft Council of Europe / EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe and their five headlines. The session, however, is not about the text of the Guidelines, which will be distributed as background paper to the Conference. It is about living library legislation and how a normative approach can impact on the soundness of the library system of a country.

**Barbara Schleihagen**, Director, German Library Association, Germany will clarify what is library legislation and what is library policy, with an eye on countries having a library legislation and countries where libraries are not regulated by legislation, but by policy acts (in Germany, for instance, five regional states out of 16). The governance of a library system is, or may be, the result of a savvy combination of legislation and policy.

**Knut Skansen**, Director Oslo Municipal Library, Norway, will introduce the concept of libraries as an “independent meeting place and arena for public discussion and debate” (Norwegian Library Act, 2013). This act has been determinant to assign new responsibilities to libraries, especially in Nordic countries. Can the Norwegian library act be considered a model for Europe?

**Dragos-Adrian Neagu**, Director at Biblioteca Judeteana "Panait Israti" Braila, President Romanian Library Association, will describe the process of transforming library policy into library legislation, and how this process has provided momentum for the development of the Romanian library system.

**Kathrin Merkle**, Head of the Culture and Cultural Heritage Division, and **Jovana Poznan**, Project Officer, Culture and Cultural Heritage Division, Council of Europe will expand upon the status of Council of Europe Guidelines, any Guidelines, for the Council of Europe and the civil society. Their status in relation to other Council of Europe instruments will be examined, together with the process they have to go through, from their cradle (interrelation with the civil society, ministerial relevance) to the maturity of the CDCPP or Committee of Ministers approval.
9. Session 3: Library commitment towards an equitable society
by Andrew Cranfield

The Chair will introduce the EBLIDA First European Report on E-lending in Public Libraries.
This session, however, is not about the EBLIDA study, but will focus upon the main issues concerning e-lending in public libraries.

Giuseppe Vitiello, Director, EBLIDA, will expand upon the interaction between copyright and its economic foundation. A legal approach to e-lending may be detrimental for a complete understanding of the issues and perhaps it is better to take into account the whole of the e-book chain and the economic relations between the stakeholders.

Valérie Bouissou, Director, Bibliothèque Municipale Nîmes, France, will present the first EBLIDA report on e-lending in Europe. This is an attempt to see e-lending issues in a public library perspective. Nine countries are included in the report which focuses on e-lending, the e-book chain, e-lending models, and the discrepancy between circulation figures for analogue materials and those for e-lending.

Erna Winters, Managing Director ABC, Huis, Netherlands, will describe the key role played by an intermediate layers of aggregators in the e-lending chain, either because they negotiate on behalf of libraries, or because they aggregate resources and standardise models and practices.

Mikkel Christoffersen, Chief Consultant, The Digital Public Library, Denmark, will present the successful model of e-lending in Danish libraries based on cooperation between librarians and publishers. Cooperation and communication between librarians and publishers in Denmark has provided great momentum for the expansion of e-lending in Denmark.

10. Europe Challenge 2022: The future is now
Open from 9 May to 27 May 2022

Europe today faces great challenges: war, polarisation,
If we are to respond to these challenges, people of Europe must lead the way in solidarity. But if we are to find solidarity, there must be safe spaces where people can come together and build understanding. Libraries, with their connections to communities and to municipalities and local governments, are such spaces. Recognisable to all, they provide access to trusted information and knowledge that is needed now more than ever.

We are calling on every library in Europe to apply to the 2022 Europe Challenge: from public libraries to mobile, rural, school, university and prison libraries, municipal and national libraries.

Are you a library working with your community in Europe and do you want to solve a challenge together?

Read more about the 2022 Europe Challenge & Apply!

Open from 9 May to 27 May 2022. The Future is now!

Libraries and communities solve challenges to make a stronger Europe

Join online at 16:00 CET, Europe Day 9 May 2022

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

May 16
Assemblée générale du Cfibd
Place: Paris, France
Organizer: CFIBD - Comité français international bibliothèques et documentation

May 16
67e congrès - ABF: Les bibliothèques sont-elles indispensables?
May 16-18
DTCE 22 – 2nd International Online Conference on Digital Transformation in Culture and Education
Place: Online event
Organizer: Serbian Library Association Section for Digital Transformation

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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