



A History of EBLIDA

The first 25 years of the European Bureau of Library, Information and
Documentation Associations

EBLIDA

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THE ORIGIN OF EBLIDA

The need for a European federation was first expressed during the 53rd IFLA conference in Brighton in 1987. IFLA (*International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*) was not in a position to establish a regional division for Europe. Therefore, on the 20th of August 1987, the *Library Association* (LA), the later *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals* (CILIP) organised a meeting, chaired by LA Chief Executive George Cunningham, at their headquarter in London. Like publishers and booksellers, librarians should also have a European advocacy group. It was about time; a first *Green Paper on copyright and the challenge of technology - Copyright issues requiring immediate action* (COM (88) 172 final) was published by the European Commission on the 7th of June 1988.

Then in 1990, the LA organised an international meeting in London (18-19 May), with circa 40 representatives. A working group was set up in 1991 to create a new European organisation for library, information and documentation associations in the member states of the European Community (EC) to represent and defend the interests of libraries in European affairs, especially in view of EC legislation and actions which affected libraries e.g. directives on rental and lending rights and the legal protection of databases, action plans for libraries and culture. **The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations' (EBLIDA) inaugural assembly took place in The Hague, The Netherlands, on the 13th of June 1992**, in the presence of 13 organisations from 9 countries. The input of the British (leading) and the Dutch (funding) was decisive.

THE 90s, THE GOLDEN AGE OF EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

The 90s was the Golden Age of European programmes especially dedicated to libraries, mostly represented by the framework *Telematics*. Right up until today, EBLIDA's continued lobbying initiatives aim to influence European cultural programmes by integrating libraries. As well as this, the association promotes the development of these projects, in particular by being involved in the transmission of information about programmes.

EBLIDA has acted therefore as a communication channel, by relaying information about the many European programmes launched by the Commission to its members.

The first *Library Action Plan of the European Communities* was launched in March 1990, as part of the programme *Telematic systems in areas of general interest*, which was integrated in the *Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development*, also just called *Framework Programme* (FP).

Here are some of the European cultural programmes, about which EBLIDA informed its members: KALEIDOSCOPE (1996-1999: *European Community support for culture*), ARIANE (1997-1998: *support for books and reading*), RAPHAEL (1997-2000: *a cultural heritage programme for Europe*), CULTURE 2000 (2000-2006), CULTURE, MEDIA AND MEDIA MUNDUS (2007-2013) and CREATIVE EUROPE (2014-2020).

Historically, the association's mission has also been to motivate its members to participate in programmes, such as ESPRIT (1983-1998: *European Strategic Programme on Research in Information Technology*), MEDIA (I, II, plus, 1991-2006), ACTS (*Advanced Communication Technology Services*), IST (*Information Society Technologies*), TEN-Telecom (*Trans-European*

Networks Telecommunications), INFO2000 (1996-1999), MLIS (*Multilingual Information Society*), etc., without forgetting all the cooperation programmes with Central and Eastern Europe after 1990.

Outside of *Telematics*, productive collaborations between libraries were part of the cooperation development projects DESIRE (*Development of a European Service for Information on Research and Education*), CHILIAS (*Children in Libraries*, 1996-1998), COBRA (*Computerised Bibliographic Record Actions*, followed by COBRA+), MOBILE (*Extending European Information Access through Mobile Libraries*, 1994-1997), ELVIL (*European Legislative Virtual Library*), PublicA (*Concerted Action for Public Libraries*) and EPIC (*European Preservation Information Centre*).

1992 AND 1993, THE PIVOTAL YEARS

The creation of EBLIDA has to be placed in the context of a general movement towards the formation of European stakeholders during the years 1985-1995. This happened with the ending of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty, on the 1st of January 1993, formally establishing the European Union (EU). Finally European issues were taken into account by the world of libraries. Librarians began to recognise that libraries were part of the European integration processes. Since the beginning, together with LIBER (*Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche*), more orientated towards research, EBLIDA continues to be among the most important organisations working on library issues at European level. Normally EBLIDA intervenes at the proposal stage at EU-level. But back then in 1992, very soon after its birth, EBLIDA had already had a positive impact with the *Council Directive 92/100/EEC of 19 November 1992 on rental right and lending right and on certain rights related to copyright in the field of intellectual property*. This was EBLIDA's first major lobbying success.

The small association was rapidly organised around a Council, which met each year, an Executive Committee of 10 elected members and a Secretariat of 1 to 2 employees. Members met and still meet in working groups. The first annual meeting took place in Barcelona, on the 23rd of August 1993.

Keeping members informed was and still is important. From 1993, this was done through two online serials, *Update* and *Hot News*, and a discussion list. From 1996 to 2002 a quarterly magazine, *Information Europe*, was printed and published until the perpetual limited resources prevented its continuation.

In September 1993, even before IFLA, EBLIDA obtained official observer status at WIPO (*World Intellectual Property Organisation*) meetings. The association joined IFLA in 1994 and worked together with FID (*Federation for Information and Documentation*, 1895-2002). The 1990s were also years of internationalisation of authors' rights. Two new important treaties were signed in December 1996: the *World Treaty on Copyright - WTC*, in addition to the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works* (1896), which extends the protection of works to the digital age, and the *WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty* (WPPT). EBLIDA intervened, from November 1996 on, in the new treaties, adopting a constructive position in which it proposed improvements. Both treaties came into effect in 2002. The creation of the *World Trade Organisation* (WTO) in 1995 temporally corresponds

to several treaties of which two will interest libraries: TRIPS (*Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights*) and especially GATS (*General Agreement on Trade in Service*). At international level, EBLIDA also didn't hesitate to work together with LIBER and EIFL (*Electronic Information for Libraries*).

Since November 1993 EBLIDA has been recognised by the Council of Europe (COE, Strasbourg), which asked the association to organise a conference on the cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries. The conference finally took place in May 1994 in Strasbourg. Together with the COE the EBLIDA Group of experts on copyright edited the *Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe*, in January 2000, still the best European paper on this topic in recent times. Another cooperation with EBLIDA since 2013 helped the COE to define its *Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)2 on the Internet of Citizens*, adopted on 10 February 2016. The association continues to work closely with the COE Democratic Governance Directorate.

In November 1993 EBLIDA participated in a consultation meeting organised by Directorate-General (DG) XIII in Luxembourg on the theme of copyright and electronic transfer services. In 1994 the association was involved in an initiative to raise public libraries' awareness of European information to sensitise the general public, which culminated in January 1995 in a conference, organised jointly by the European Commission and EBLIDA, in the United Kingdom.

In 1994 projects initiated by the European Commission, coordinated/partnered by EBLIDA, led to the creation of ECUP (*European Copyright User Platform*), followed by ECUP+ (1995), then extended to CECUP (*Central and Eastern European Copyright User Platform*, 1998) and TECUP (*Testbed implementation of the ECUP framework*, 1999). A juridical guide *Licensing Digital Resources - How to Avoid the Legal Pitfalls*, edited by Emanuella Giavarra, was published in the context of ECUP, which knew some achievement. It was updated in 2001. The same year EBLIDA, together with LIBER, became a member of the *Frankfurt group: European Consensus Forum on Academic Information*, heir of the *TECUP Strategy Advisory Group*.

The framework *Gutenberg* was set up in 1995 as a programme for libraries influenced by EBLIDA. It was quite a success and the document *Libraries as Partners in the Promotion of Books and Reading* was edited by the association for DG X.

Sometimes, occasionally, outside of Brussels and the EU, EBLIDA defends ideals, like the freedom of expression and information, and against all form of censorship. The association distinguished itself by supporting French libraries under pressure by representatives of the right-wing *Front National* in the years 1995-1996.

EBLIDA furthermore collaborated with networks, as for example the *European Forum for the Arts and Heritage* (EFAH), which became *Culture Action Europe* in 2008.

1995-2001, TOWARDS THE INFOSOC DIRECTIVE

A new directive, which became INFOSOC later on, was announced with the publication of the *Green Paper of the 27th of July 1995 on Copyright and Related Rights in the Information Society* (COM (95) 382 final). EBLIDA reacted to it in October 1995 and November 1996.

When a first version of the directive was presented in March 1998, the association published a long document *Save Future Access to Information now*. From 1998 to 2001, 3-4 years of intense lobbying were invested in the INFOSOC process, actively supported by LIBER and national associations. Together with EFPICC (*European Fair Practices in Copyright Campaign*), BEUC (*European Consumers' Association*), EBU (*European Blind Union*), and EACEM (*European Association of Consumer Electronics Manufacturers*), EBLIDA, with its director Teresa Hackett, was able to influence the process positively, which was "more favourable for libraries and a great improvement over the results of the first reading in Parliament in 1999".

The INFOSOC Directive (2001/29/EC) of 22nd of May 2001 *on the Harmonisation of Certain Aspects of Copyright and Related Rights in the Information Society*, which aimed to harmonise authors' rights in the EU and encourage the development of the information society, also marked the increase of the work of WIPO. Remember that the decade of 2000-2010 is known as the one of the democratisation of the internet.

THE YEARS 2000 AND THE LEAD ON EUROPEAN PROJECTS

From the beginning of the 2000s to 2015, the European Union changed in depth. European integration gained momentum in 1999 with the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam and in 2007, when the political structure of the Union was modified by the Treaty of Lisbon. Significant upheavals were generated by the increasing number of member states: 13 new member states joined the EU from 2000 to 2013, which is almost the equivalent to doubling the number of Member States.

In 2001 EBLIDA was involved in two important projects: PULMAN (*Public Libraries Mobilising Advanced Networks*, 2001-2003) and its sequel CALIMERA (*Cultural Applications: Local Institutions Mediating Electronic Resource Access*, 2003-2005). The association, with LIBER, also participated in the European programme's e-CONTENT (2001-2004) and its continuation, e-CONTENT+ (2005-2008).

In 2002 and 2003 EBLIDA attended several workshops and consultations organised by the Commission in the field of DRMS (*Digital Rights Management Systems*), the application of which was explicitly supported by article 6 of the INFOSOC directive.

From 10-12th December 2003 the first phase of the *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS), organised by the *International Telecommunication Union* (ITU) and the *United Nations* (UN), took place in Geneva. The second followed in November 2005 in Tunis. Since 2006 annual WSIS Forum meetings carry on the work.

Some projects needed help and EBLIDA was at the forefront. For ENTITLE, *Libraries for Lifelong Learning* (2007-2009), for example, the association organised the final conference. A new partnership began in 2007. From 19-21st September EBLIDA and EUCLID (*European Association for Library & Information Education and Research*) organised their first ever joint conference in Lisbon, Portugal, to discuss the future of European library and information science education.

In 2008 EBLIDA and its long-time sister organisation LIBER established a *Joint Expert Group on Digitisation and Online Access* (JEGDO) to help libraries digitise materials to know what

standards to use. Europe required a joining of forces: when the European Commission published the *Green Paper on Copyright in the Knowledge Economy* [COM(2008) 466 final] of the 16th of July 2008, EBLIDA, LIBER and SCOUNL (*The Society of College, National and University Libraries*) produced one single joint answer.

On 26th of October 2009, the European Commission organised a *Public Hearing on Orphan Works*. 19 organisations participated, including EBLIDA. This discussion led to the *Communication on Copyright in the Knowledge Economy* (Brussels, 19th of October, 2009 COM(2009) 532 final), which emphasises digitisation and accessibility by announcing a solution to the problem that orphan works can't be scanned because rights owners cannot be found and persons with disabilities cannot have access to certain works. The orphan works directive saw the light in 2012.

2009, THE VIENNA DECLARATION

The organisation NAPLE (*National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe*), founded in 2002, was and still is a privileged partner organisation of EBLIDA. Joint annual conferences became a tradition. On the 8th of May 2009, during the EBLIDA-NAPLE congress in Vienna, a white paper, called the *Declaration of Vienna* on public libraries in the information society was released. The *Knowledge Society* meanwhile was replaced by the *Information Society*.

On the 9th of October 2009 an important step in European lobbying policy took place: EBLIDA was officially registered in the EU Transparency Register as *Non-governmental organisations, platforms and networks and similar*. Identification number 32997432484-79 was generated. Recognised as a lobbying organisation, non-commercial of course, involved in the improvement of libraries, which (almost) everyone loves, the association could and will continue to open doors in a rather easier way. In that time EBLIDA followed mainly EU initiatives, policies and legislative files, like copyright reform, the European research area and illiteracy, or the *Google Book* agreement.

A highlight in EBLIDA membership and representation history was reached in 2010: for the first time in nearly 20 years of existence, the association had full member representatives from each EU State! On 20th of September 2011 federations of right owners and LIBER, EBLIDA and CENL (*Conference of European National Librarians*) signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Key Principles on the Digitisation and Making Available of Out-of-Commerce Works* in Brussels.

In May 2012 EBLIDA and IFLA published a joint position against ACTA (*Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement*). Note that EBLIDA, LIBER and IFLA were and are all housed in the National Library of The Hague, the *World library capital*, in the Netherlands, in remarkable proximity, which promotes communication of course.

One of the biggest breakthroughs at WIPO level was the *Marrakesh Treaty*, facilitating access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled, adopted the 27th of June 2013 in Marrakesh. EBLIDA and EIFL actively participated at this conference.

2014, THE RIGHT TO E-READ

2014 was the year in which of two important new players entered at EU level: ELINET (*European Literacy Policy Network*) and *Public Libraries 2020* (PL2020), the latter by the *Reading and Writing Foundation*. After having prepared an agenda-setting-campaign, *E-books in libraries*, to raise awareness about problems in the area of e-lending in the years 2012-2013, EBLIDA launched a Europe wide *Right to E-Read Day* the 23rd of April 2014, a date which coincided with the Unesco World Book and Copyright Day and was just before European elections (22-25th of May 2014). Note that a major public consultation on the review of the EU copyright rules took place just before, from the 5th of December 2013 to the 5th of March 2014. On the 5th of November 2014 the association organised a breakfast inside the European Parliament in Brussels on the topic of libraries as spaces with access to information and knowledge. The day before, EBLIDA and PL2020 had jointly organised their first workshop *Lobbying for Libraries in the EU* in the Bibliothèque des Riches-Clares in Brussels City Centre. Librarians from 15 countries attended it.

SINCE 1992, AN ONGOING BATTLE FOR AN IMPROVED COPYRIGHT FRAMEWORK FOR LIBRARIES...

In January 2015 EBLIDA, LIBER, EIFL, several national associations, and IFLA, united in the coalition *Copyright for Creativity* (C4C, founded in 2010), edited *The copyright manifesto: how the European Union should support innovation and creativity through copyright reform*. On the 19th of January Julia Reda, rapporteur of the Parliament's review of INFOSOC Directive (2001/29/EC) since November 2014, published her high-profile *draft report on the implementation of Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22nd of May 2001 on the Harmonisation of Certain Aspects of Copyright and Related Rights in the Information Society (2014/2256(INI))*. The deposit at the Committee on legal affairs (JURI) of the EU Parliament was made on the 15th of January. Between November 2014 and January 2015 Julia Reda also received representatives of EBLIDA and LIBER to listen to their complaints and recommendations. On 9th of December 2015 the European Commission released the communication *Towards a Modern, More European Copyright Framework*. EBLIDA and IFLA reacted the day after with a press release.

At the end of 2015 EBLIDA and the Library Association of Latvia (LBB), supported by PL2020, started the initiative *Library Advocacy 4 EU!* and organised lobbying workshops to train librarians from all over the EU. The first one, entitled *Increase the power of your influence: individually and collectively*, took place in Brussels from 1-3rd of February 2016. EBLIDA helped LBB also to contact as many national stakeholders as possible, for the survey on non-formal and informal learning in public libraries in Europe, mid 2016.

During the year 2016 EBLIDA representatives had several meetings with the *Federation of European Publishers* (FEP), the *European Writers Council* and the *European and International Federation of Booksellers* (EIBF) in Brussels, to look at issues of common interest such as literacy.

2016, A STEP FORWARD IN E-LENDING

Good news came from Luxembourg, on the 16th of June 2016, when the European Court of Justice (CJEU) issued a positive press release of the Advocate General's Opinion in Case C-

174/15, *Vereniging Openbare Bibliotheken (VOB)* against *Stichting Leenrecht*, on the question about whether the lending of e-books could apply under the lending directive of 2006. The work of the VOB, the Dutch Public Library Association, supported by EBLIDA, finally paid off.

INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE SECTOR

The biggest library lobbying event in EU history took place on the 19th of October 2016: a unique, interactive exhibition *Generation Code: Born at the Library* was organised by PL2020 in the European Parliament as part of EU Code Week. Librarians from all EU states welcomed their Members of European Parliament (MEP) at individual booths to show them the capability of public libraries. EBLIDA helped to boost the event and was well represented.

At international level another breakthrough was registered on the 30th of September 2016, when the Marrakesh Treaty for the Visually Impaired, officially entitled *Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled*, entered into force.

On 3-4th May 2017, at the joint EBLIDA-NAPLE Annual Council and Conference in the new public model library *Dokk1* in Aarhus, Denmark, the association will celebrate 25 years of frequently successful lobbying for libraries in Europe.

To be continued ...

A quarter of a century,
summarised by ID VIAF 18157592,
in December 2016.



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