Dear Colleagues,

Save the date on your Agenda: 11th June 2021, the EBLIDA Day!

The key event is certainly the organisation of the EBLIDA Conference, an open-to-all conference dedicated to the EBLIDA Think The Unthinkable (TTU) programme: a post-Covid library agenda meeting Sustainable Development Goals to be funded through European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF 2021-2027).

In two hours we shall present case studies of projects that have received ESI Funds, national TTU
This event comes after a morning dedicated to the organisation of the Annual Council, which is the general assembly of EBLIDA Members (by invitation only). By constitution, the Council determines the policy and the programme of activities of EBLIDA; it is its ultimate decision-making body, also in charge of approving financial reports, the composition of the Executive Committee and the designation of the President of EBLIDA. This Annual Council will be of particular importance since a new Executive Committee will take office and the President will be designated. I have given availability to renew my mandate for one more term.

It is of utmost importance for our members to note, this year, because of the ongoing pandemic, and the fact that there are 11 candidates nominated for 10 seats on the Executive Board, voting will take place fully online and before the Council meeting. Voting will open on Monday, 17th of May and close on Friday 28th of May. Members will received a password protected link to the voting platform over the coming days. Read our article 3 on the Council for more information on registration and voting.

The next event on the agenda of the EBLIDA Day will be the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, with the designation of a Deputy President, EBLIDA and a Treasurer, EBLIDA.

These three EBLIDA events are much more than official landmarks in the life of our organisation. With its focus on sustainable development goals and legislative issues in European libraries the action of the new Executive Committee will be highly political. Libraries are not neutral places; they make choices and in every choice they express a point of view; from the book you buy or don't buy, to the audience you prioritize or not.

The implementation of sustainable development goals in European libraries makes it possible for citizens to express their democratic rights: access to information, filling the digital divide, or engagement in civil liberties. Sustainable Development Goals are not partisan objectives; the values they convey are enshrined in our political constitution. Therefore, the European 2030 agenda on sustainable development is no accessory mission for libraries; as public institutions (paid for with public money), they have a duty to work on it.

The future of libraries lies in their dialogue with society; they should truly become and remain a place for all. The future of EBLIDA lies in in-depth engagement with its Members and in proposing solutions on how libraries get appropriate resources for the missions they fulfil.

Yours sincerely,

Ton van Vlimmeren
EBLIDA President

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2. EBLIDA Annual Conference “European Structural Funds and libraries: the win-win approach” (11 June, 3h-5h pm)

Registration is now open for EBLIDA Conference

Please join us for this exciting afternoon dedicated to making European Structural Funds accessible for your library! Many libraries have already benefitted from European Structural Funds and want to share this with you during the Conference.

Curious about the Programme? That is now also available, find out what’s happening and who’s speaking by following this link [http://www.eblida.org/29th-eblida-annual-conference-2021/programme.html](http://www.eblida.org/29th-eblida-annual-conference-2021/programme.html)

**Background**

With a report published in September 2020, EBLIDA launched the “Think The Unthinkable” (TTU) strategy, consisting of setting up a post-Covid library agenda meeting sustainable development goals to be funded through [European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027](https://ec.europa.eu/info/deadlines_en).

The first step of this strategy was the organisation of nine workshops: three of them (October 2020) were Europe-oriented; the others were organised by various organisations in six different countries, as follows:

- 13-14 and 16 October 2020: TUT Workshops (Europe)
- 24 November 2021: TTU conference – France
- 25 January 2021: TTU conference – Netherlands
- 8 February 2021: TTU conference – Greece
- 22 February 2021: TTU conference – Latvia
- 17 March 2021: TTU conference – Bulgaria
- 28 April 2021: TTU conference – Italy.

The EBLIDA Conference is designed to cross fertilise library experiences of, and approaches to, the European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027.

**Upon registration, participants will receive the EBLIDA Guide “European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027 – The EBLIDA Guide for Library Applicants”. It is a “Think The Unthinkable” resource, prepared by the EBLIDA Secretariat in collaboration with the EBLIDA ELSIA Expert Group.**

**Objectives**

- To inform EBLIDA Members and the general community of librarians of the TTU strategy and the activities having been ignited by EBLIDA’s work;
- To share ESIF-based best practices and SDG-oriented activities in libraries;
- To inspire similar projects and practices in European libraries, both at national and local levels, and connecting them to the EU level;
- In the long term, to raise the status of libraries and make them structurally relevant within the 2030 European agenda on sustainable development.

**EBLIDA Conference Programme**

*European Structural Funds and libraries: the win-win approach*

3:00 - 3:10: Introduction (Stefano Parise, Director, Milan Public Library and Deputy President EBLIDA)
3:10 - 3:40: Case studies (Chair: Ton van Vlimmeren, President EBLIDA)
3:10 - 3:20: How ERDF was used by the Montreuil Library to prevent school drop-outs (Guillaume Gast, Chief Médiathèque Nord, Strasbourg)
3:20 - 3:30: The Dutch library programme for most deprived people (Theo Kemperman, Director Public Library in Rotterdam)
3:30 - 3:40: Questions and answers

3:40 - 4:20: Think The Unthinkable in six countries
3:40 - 4:10: National TTU Strategies in:

- **Bulgaria:** Spaska Tarandova (Executive Director, Global Libraries Foundation) and Marina Encheva (Associate Professor, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT))
- **France:** Eléonore Clavreul (International relations, Bibliothèque Publique d’Information, Paris)
- **Greece:** Antonios Mourikis (Librarian, University of Athens)
- **Italy:** Valentina Bondesan (Responsible Innovation and Development CSBNO, Milan)
- **Latvia:** Katrīna Kukaine (Director of Development department, National Library of Latvia)
- **Netherlands:** Maarten Krump (Associate Partner, The Alignment House and Expeditie NL)

4:10 – 4:20: Questions and answers

4:20 - 4:50: Transversal issues
4:20 - 4:30: Monitoring ESI Funds 2021-2027 (Giuseppe Vitiello, Director EBLIDA)
4:30 - 4:40: Project evaluation (Annalisa Cicerchia, Researcher, Italian Institute of Statistics)
4:40 - 4:50: Questions and answers

4:50-5:00: Next steps and Conclusions (Ton van Vlimmeren)

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3. EBLIDA Annual Council, Friday 11th May 10:00 – 13:00

For the second year running, we are once more holding our most important member’s event online.

Registration for the Council meeting is now open at [https://eblida2021.sciencesconf.org/](https://eblida2021.sciencesconf.org/).
The draft Agenda is also available here: [https://eblida2021.sciencesconf.org/resource/page/id/1](https://eblida2021.sciencesconf.org/resource/page/id/1)

Towards the end of the meeting, the newly elected EBLIDA Executive Board members will be announced! This will be a very exciting moment, since we have 11 candidates for 10 seats.
For the first time, voting will be fully online. All of our members will receive a link to the voting platform which will be password protected. Voting will open on Friday 18th of May and close on Friday 28th.

For further information on our candidates, please continue to the next article.

4. A new EBLIDA Executive Committee is shaping up: latest news about Candidates

Together with the Council, the EBLIDA Executive Committee is the main EBLIDA body. Conform to article 39 of the EBLIDA Constitution, the task of the Executive Committee consists of submitting an annual programme of activities to the Council as well as the annual report with budget and accounts. In practice, EC exercises all managerial and administrative powers, including submitting the membership structure and the annual membership fee and establishing Standing Committees, Expert Groups, and ad hoc Committees, and to appoint their chairpersons. Finally, EC also appoints the EBLIDA Director.

The current EC, elected in May 2018, included eight Members. Because of statutory requirements, the following Members will not run for another term: Stefano Parise, EBLIDA Deputy President (Italy, AIB), Jean-Marie Reding, EBLIDA Treasurer (Luxembourg, ALBAD), Steen Bording Andersen (Denmark, DLA), Alicia Sellés Carot (Spain, FESABID).

This year, because of the ongoing pandemic, and the fact that there are 11 candidates nominated for 10 seats on the Executive Board, voting will take place fully online and before the Council meeting. Voting will open on Monday, 17th of May and close on Friday 28th of May. Members will received a password protected link to the voting platform over the coming days.

**Nomination for the position of EBLIDA President 2021-2024**

Each Full Member association is entitled to nominate one representative for President. The candidate does not need to belong to an EBLIDA member association, but the nomination must be supported by at least three EBLIDA full members. The Vice-President will be elected by the new Executive Committee during their first meeting after the elections.

**Candidate:**

*Ton van Vlimmeren*

Netherlands

[2nd Term]

**Nominated by:**

Bulgaria - Bulgarian Library and Information Association (BLIA)

Denmark - Danish Library Association

Germany - Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID)

Germany - Bremen Public Library

Greece - Association of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists (AGLIS)
Nominations for the position of Executive Committee Member
2021-2024

Each Full Member association is entitled to nominate one representative and one substitute each to the Executive Committee, which consists of up to a maximum of 10 members each from different full member organisations. Candidates must belong to a full member association and their nomination does not need to be seconded. Individuals can serve a maximum of two terms on the Executive Committee.

According to the EBLIDA Constitution, the Executive Committee should reflect a geographic and professional balance.

Candidates in alphabetical order:

1. Italy
   Associazione Italiana Biblioteche (AIB)
   (Italian Library Association)
   [1st Term]

2. Julie Calmus
   France
   ABF, Association des Bibliothécaires Français
   (French Association of Librarians)
   [2nd Term]

3. Andrew Cranfield
   Denmark
   Danmarks Biblioteksforening
   (Danish Library Association)
   [1st Term]

4. Marina Encheva
   Bulgaria
   Българска библиотечно-информационнa асоциация
   (Bulgarian Library and Information Association - BLIA)
   [2nd Term]
5. Germany
BID - Bibliothek & Information Deutschland
(Federal Union of German Library and Information Associations)
[2nd Term]

6. Katrīna Kukaine
Latvia
Latvijas Nacionālā Bibliotēka
(National Library of Latvia)
[1st Term]

7. Rauha Maarno
Finland
Suomen Kirjastoseura
(Finnish Library Association)
[1st Term]

8. Antonios Mourikis
Greece
Association of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists (AGLIS)
[1st Term]

9. Mairead Owens
Ireland
City Library of Dublin
[1st Term]
5. Think The Unthinkable workshop in Latvia and priorities of Latvian libraries in European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027

by Katrīna Kukaine, Director of the Department of Development, National Library of Latvia

The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), the Library Association of Latvia (LAL) and the National Library of Latvia (NLL), in cooperation with the Latvian Ministry of Culture, held a webinar in February, 2021 on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) opportunities for libraries from 2021-2027, with 148 participants taking part. Consequently Latvian libraries can begin preparations for the new ESIF planning period, examine options in setting sustainable development goals and evaluate their achievements in the previous planning period.

Latvian libraries can take pride in the fact that they have managed ESIF funding in various
implemented using various financial instruments – the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Latvian Rural Development Programme or the ERASMUS programme; some individual libraries have managed funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund, incl. the National Library of Latvia.

The project themes and results clearly demonstrate the contribution of Latvian public libraries in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): 28% of projects included in the 2014-2020 planning period were socially inclusive events (events for seniors, social integration of children from dysfunctional families, promotion of volunteer work and public health etc.); 24% of projects were focused on practical results – improvements to infrastructure (construction of a new library building and/or purchase of equipment), another 24% on educational activities of libraries and skills development (informal education programmes, professional development, skills acquisition, for instance, digital skills) and 18% of projects implemented innovative services (interactive formats for events, digital activity centres etc.). Eight per cent of Latvian libraries were involved in the improvement of local public space (environmental and nature tourism, creation of public spaces near libraries etc.). The ESIF project themes of the National Library of Latvia can be added to the contribution made by public libraries: cultural heritage digitalisation and professional development.

Regarding the new ESIF period in Latvia, a project has been developed for the ESI and Cohesion Funds 2021-2027 planning period. This project has to be discussed and clarified at national level when the coordination process with the European Commission starts (approximately, May 2021). Approval of the operational programme is scheduled for the second half of 2021 or at the end of the year, but advertisement of the tendering process, preparation and submission of project applications is planned for 2022.

The webinar also created an opportunity for representatives of various Latvian ministries responsible for culture, education and science, as well as regional development, to outline their vision for opportunities and priorities in the library sector. The Director of the European Union Funds Department at the Ministry of Culture, Zanda Saulīte, focused on various policy planning documents in Latvia which outline the direction that culture as well as library development are taking. The strategy is focused on “the preservation, interaction and enrichment of cultural space” in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvija 2030) which invites people to “preserve and develop the cultural capital of Latvia and to promote a sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural space by developing a national identity based on social creativity and on a quality cultural environment in Latvia”. The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 emphasises the “Contribution of culture and sport to a sustainable society”, and is a declared goal within the national strategy: “Culture and sport promote the economic growth and social development of Latvia and contribute to a creative and sustainable society”.

The main objective of the National Cultural Policy Guidelines 2021-2027, still in the drafting stage, is the sustainability of Latvian culture and its accessibility, and the involvement of society in cultural processes.

Speaking more specifically about ESIF 2021-2027 objectives – A smarter Europe (PO1), A greener Europe (PO2), A more connected Europe (PO3), A more social Europe (PO4) and A Europe closer to citizens (PO5) – investments will focus on the first and second objectives. These priorities will be allocated 65–85% of ERDF and Cohesion Fund resources, depending on the relative prosperity of member states.

The potential in the cultural sector, incl. libraries, is linked with the objectives “A more social Europe (PO4)” and “A Europe closer to citizens (PO5)”. And so, for example, one of the tasks is
The integration of current social themes in the provision of culture as well as broader digitisation also stay among the Latvian ESI priorities.

Another task is the improvement of services – developing social education, social integration processes and services which promote employment (life-long learning and skills, especially for children and youth, seniors and people with special needs); cultural skills and development of services that further knowledge and improve the quality of life of local communities. Tasks will also include the professional development of employees in the cultural sector, professional development, based on current needs, in the adult education sector, highlighting the importance of this domain in a) the development of the cultural and economic sectors, b) social integration, c) the acquisition of skills of older employees working in cultural institutions incl. digital skills, d) strengthening capacity and e) encouraging the development of new cultural products and services (for example, museum exhibitions and educational activities in museums, library events, events in cultural centres).

Uģis Bisenieks, Director of the Public Administration Services Development Department at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, outlined plans for the role of Latvian libraries within the framework of a joint provision of services. The principle of a “One stop agency” (OSA) in the provision of services – both face-to-face and digital – has been set as a Latvian government priority. This principle provides community members with the opportunity to receive government and municipal council services in one place, and a major role will be carried out by a joint government and municipal council customer service network, later – public libraries in Latvia will serve as the basis for development of a customer service system.

The inevitable expansion of the digital environment places community members with lesser digital skills at a disadvantage. Therefore, by providing community members with the opportunity to access the most frequently used government services not only in municipal customer centres but also in libraries, the goal is to implement a systemic customer service policy – one network, one access point, and a unified standard of customer service. The training of librarians to become digital agents already commenced in 2018-2020, with 1444 librarians taking part in training. This course of action regarding digital agents is also planned for projects in the next planning period.

Liene Kupča, senior expert at the Structural Funds Department at the Ministry of Education and Science, highlighted the role of libraries in the digital transformation of the education sector. In the coming years library school services will include, for instance: shared services, information literacy for school students and teachers, new curriculum and school governance funding programmes. Another important theme is libraries and higher education, especially shared use of resources in higher education and development of new digital services for university students, researchers and teaching staff.

To sum up, the importance of libraries will grow in the near future, by ensuring quality of life of community members not only in Latvia but in Europe as a whole and by providing them with opportunities to apply for funding support to improve the range of services and to achieve sustainable development goals.

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6. Think The Unthinkable workshop in Bulgaria

by Marina Encheva, EBLIDA Executive Committee Member
Organised by the Bulgarian Library and Information Association, the “Global Libraries - Bulgaria”
and Investment Funds. The event involved 76 librarians from public and academic libraries in Bulgaria and saw the participation of Ton van Vlimmeren, President EBLIDA and Giuseppe Vitiello, Director EBLIDA.

The National Library “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”, the Library of the Medical University - Plovdiv and the Regional National Library “P. R. Slaveykov” - Veliko Tarnovo informed participants of their experience in the implementation of projects funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) during the past programming period.

Special attention was paid to several large projects, such as “Building and developing a centre of excellence - Heritage BG”, Competence centre “Personalized Innovative Medicine (PERIMED)”, Digital cultural treasury “North +”, etc.

Giuseppe Vitiello presented the EBLIDA report “Think the Unthinkable: A post Covid-19 European Library Agenda meeting the Sustainable Development Goals to be funded through the European Structural and Investment Funds (2021-2027)”. The report contains an analysis of the risks and challenges libraries are facing in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, how ESIF specific objectives can be used to meet SDGs and practical recommendations on how to prepare projects. By committing themselves to this broader framework, libraries can prove to be “structurally” important for the social and economic development of European countries, in particular in a post Covid-19 age which requires good management of financial resources.

The Webinar also included a presentation of the EBLIDA Matrix and how libraries can implement activities in the European 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and file applications within the ESIF framework. The EBLIDA Matrix includes five different sections: 1. A selection of EU programmes likely to be relevant for libraries; 2. Library policies; 3. Opportunities for library funding; 4. Basic indicators and 5. Library indicators.

A Q&A session at the end of the Conference provided useful input and a rich exchange of experience.

7. Twenty years of UNESCO World Book Capital, what is next for this program in Europe?

by Floriane-Marielle Job

Twenty years ago, following the success of the World Book and Copyright Day, professional organisations in the book chain had the idea to nominate the best city program aimed at promoting books during the period between one “Book Day” and the next. UNESCO as an international organization aiming to foster peace through cooperation in education, science and culture decided that it would support morally and intellectually the conception and implementation of this initiative. That is how, in 2001, Madrid became the first city to be designated World Book Capital.
This initiative was a way to promote books and reading in local communities as well as to foster synergies between actors of the book chain like authors, publishers, book shops, libraries and so on. Eligibility criteria of the Advisory Committee - made up of one representative of the International Authors Forum, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, the International Publishers Association and one UNESCO representative – have not changed in twenty years and mainly focus on the implication of all the organizations working with books in the development of a program promoting reading and writing to a large audience.

Cities from all continents, from western countries to developing ones, have received this designation. The particularity of this program is that it does not come with financial support and it is down to the organizer to raise funds and find the budget to develop the activities to be implemented. Reports from former World Book Capitals suggest that the program has played a key part in the advocacy for books and reading. Most European countries already have legislation promoting books and reading, which raises the question of the added value of applying to a program such as the UNESCO World Book Capital.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030. UNESCO, as part of the United Nations, is also involved in the implementation of actions that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. Many programs carried by UNESCO are taking into account the SDGs framework so will the designation of future World Book Capital.

Reading is an essential skill for people to help them access information and form their opinion on key issues about society and our planet. Books still represent a great way to access knowledge, stories and testimonies that can help everyone be informed, inspired and more aware of the world we live in as well as encourage people to take action. Libraries have understood it for a long time and are institutions at the crossroads of issues such as education, employment, health, environment.

Ioannis Trohopoulos, who conducted the project of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens and served in Greece as the head of the Athens 2018-World Book Capital, is convinced that the future for literacy and book related programs is to reflect the current issues the world is facing especially regarding the environmental crisis. Events like the World Book Capital should take this into closer consideration especially now that the COVID 19 sanitary crisis has shown how fragile our societies are.

As Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay mentioned in her speech on the occasion of the World Book and Copyright Day 2021, "the power of books must be fully harnessed. We must ensure their access so that everyone can take refuge in reading, and by doing so, be able to dream, learn and reflect" and, if I may add, act about global issues.

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8. Invitation to the 2021 NAPLE Forum, Thursday May 20th

Please join the 2021 NAPLE Forum annual meeting which will take place on Thursday May 20th, 1pm-3pm CET. Participation is open to everyone with an interest in the future of public libraries in Europe, and beyond!

This year we will be asking about how we measure the impact of public libraries as we emerge from the pandemic period, and look over the horizon to see what’s next for the
NAPLE Members will be joined by Christian Lauersen (Director of Libraries and Citizen Services in Roskilde Municipality, Denmark), Giuseppe Vitiello (Director, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations), Ilona Kish (Director, Public Libraries 2030) and Stephen Wyber (Manager, Policy and Advocacy, IFLA).

Find out more information on the programme here: [https://naple.eu/forum2021/](https://naple.eu/forum2021/)

Register for the NAPLE Forum 2021 here: [https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/2021-naple-forum-annual-meeting-tickets-154188625329](https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/2021-naple-forum-annual-meeting-tickets-154188625329)

Please register for the event and a link for participation via Zoom will be sent to you via email.

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

**May 20**
*2021 NAPLE Forum annual meeting*
Place: Online event
Organizer: NAPLE Forum

**May 25**
*13th QQML International Conference*
Place: Athens, Greece & Streaming online
Organizer: QQML & ISAST

**May 27**
*Public libraries as centres of European cities - are they also on the European agenda?*
Place: Online event
Organizer: EBLIDA, Senate Department for Culture and Europe Berlin, City of Espoo, German Library Association (dbv), Finnish Library Association and Public Libraries 2030

**June 3**
*Next Library 2021*
Place: Online event & Aarhus, Denmark
Organizer: Next Library & Aarhus Public Libraries

**June 8-11**
*The 14th CHAOS 2021 International Conference*
Place: Athens, Greece & Streaming online
Organizer: Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA)
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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