



**EBLIDA Statement on the [Proposal of the European Parliament and of the Council for a Directive on Services in the Internal Market](#)**

*November 2005*

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1. EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, is an independent, non-profit umbrella organisation of national library, information, documentation and archive associations in Europe. Subjects on which EBLIDA concentrates are European information society issues, including copyright and licensing, culture and education and EU enlargement. We promote access to information in the digital age, and the role of archives and libraries in achieving this goal. We represent the interests of our members to the European institutions, such as the European Commission, European Parliament, and the Council of Europe.
  2. EBLIDA recognises that trade between countries is generally accompanied by advances in culture and civilisation. The Internal Market has improved the economic development within the European Union, and international trade agreements, when properly drafted, will often bring improvements to the economic wellbeing of the countries concerned.
  3. Services are high on the agenda and the European Commission, which is preparing a Directive on Services in the Internal Market. Under this directive it might become possible for Foreign Service providers to demand 'market access' for their activities within the Internal Market without having to abide by any other laws and regulations than those of their home countries.
  4. Libraries and the educational sector provide services. However, EBLIDA believes that opening services up to international competition may have adverse effects on education and on the activities of publicly funded libraries. Adverse effects are likely to arise if library services, or educational institutions
    - o risk losing their support from public funds in the country in which they operate, and/or
    - o are run largely as commercial operations.
  5. EBLIDA believes that, whatever may be the advantages of free trade in services, libraries need to remain firmly as a publicly provided service. Only public provision can guarantee that libraries are fully accountable, and that the information they provide is unbiased and gathered from the widest possible array of sources. Commercial provision cannot be relied upon to provide this important neutrality.
  6. In support of our view, we are glad to see in [UNESCO's proposed Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) the following clause in the Preamble (clause 18): 'Being convinced that cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they convey identities, values and meanings, and

must therefore not be treated as solely having commercial value'.

7. Against this background EBLIDA urges that both publicly funded and not-for-profit libraries be strictly excluded from the European Directive on Services in the Internal Market.

*The Hague, November 2005*