



EBLIDA declaration on the European Parliament Resolution on the role of libraries in modern societies

On 23 October 1998 in Strasbourg, the European Parliament adopted almost unanimously Ms Mirja Ryyänen's report on "The role of libraries in modern society" ([A4-0248/98](#)). The report calls on the European Commission and the EU Member States to take the necessary steps in support of libraries as one of the most important systems organising access to knowledge. The European Commission announced that work would now begin on a Communication addressing a number of specific issues facing libraries today including lifelong learning, copyright, literacy, regional information services and public library collaboration on access to knowledge. The Communication would also lead to more focus on activities involving libraries under the Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

EBLIDA functions as the umbrella association for library, information, archive and documentation associations and all kinds of libraries throughout Europe. The organisation was founded in 1992 and has established itself as a vital link between the European institutions and information professionals. At the moment EBLIDA represents over 95.000 libraries throughout Europe.

EBLIDA welcomes very much the comprehensive report by Ms Ryyänen, and is pleased about the thorough debate held at the European Parliament session prior to the adoption of the report.

EBLIDA notes with satisfaction the announcement made by the European Commission to start now work on a Communication addressing many of the urgent challenges that libraries and their users have to meet.

EBLIDA recommends that especially the following actions are taken in support of libraries in Europe:

1. Member States

- to provide all types of library with modern equipment, particularly Internet connections, and adequate funding to enable libraries to continue to meet the challenges facing citizens of the information society and also to take into account the costs arising from licence payments for digital materials
- to adapt their training and further training systems for library staff better to developments in the information society
- to provide national funding for digitisation and conservation programmes for their own material in order to preserve this cultural heritage for future generations
- to consider whether European information points at libraries could be set up, as experience of providing information about Europe at libraries has been positive

2. The European Commission DG XIII, [Telematics for Libraries Programme](#)

- to study the possibilities of setting up a European Union focal point for libraries with a remit both to coordinate library affairs and research and to provide training courses for library staff
- to continue to support the networking of European libraries in the 5th Framework Programme of Research and Technological Development
- to initiate studies on the principles of operation of licensing systems for the use of electronic documents, the costs of such systems and their impact on libraries

3. The European Commission DG X, [Information, Communication, Culture, Audiovisual Media](#)

- to devote a larger part of its cultural programmes and information budget to the cultural work of libraries, and to do so more unequivocally than hitherto
- to consider whether European information points at libraries could be set up in more Member States, as experience of providing information about Europe at libraries has been positive

4. The European Commission [DG Internal Market](#), Copyright Unit

- to take account of libraries and their role as an information source for members of the public when resolving copyright issues

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