



EBLIDA EBLIDA response concerning the future of the information networks of Info Points Europe

EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, is an independent, non-profit umbrella organization of national library, information, documentation and archive associations in Europe. EBLIDA represents the interests of its members to the European Institutions with a focus on information society issues, including copyright, culture, education and EU enlargement. EBLIDA promotes an unhindered access to information, culture and knowledge in the digital age.

We were informed by our colleagues-libraries, hosting an Info-Point Europe about decisions taken by the Directorate-General DG Press and Communication. Referring to the new financial regulations (1/1/2003), it was decided on September 29, 2003 to cancel the contracts with the host organisations of the Info Points Europe and EU-Carrefour, or to replace them by a contract without the annual operating grants of 20.000 Euro.

A large number of these 144 Info Points Europe serving the general population is located in a regional library, which serves as the host organisation, based on an agreement with the European Commission. As these Info-Points are related to the larger public library networks, they reach the larger part of the population of the European Member States. Therefore they are an important instrument of the information policy of the European Union towards the citizen.

We are concerned that on this short notice and without subsidy for 2004 and coming years, the European information services to the general public by public libraries cannot be continued. This is dramatic in a time where a number of important European issues are at stake: Enlargement, Constitution, Elections etc., which need the support and involvement of European citizens.

Defending the interests of the library and archive sector, and their services to the citizens in Europe we urgently request you, to find an immediate solution to continue the subsidies for 2004 and to provide a solid financial framework for the years to come.

We also recommend that the European Commission makes more use of the existing library networks and professional field of librarians, archivists and documentalists, in its information and communication services to European citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Jan-Ewout van der Putten
President

The Hague, 29 October 2003

