



European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations

Lobbying for archives and libraries

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.

QUESTIONNAIRE - EN

A. Important challenges

1. Are art and culture linked to the process of European integration and how can they contribute to it?

Art, sport, music, reading and culture play a major role in promoting integration in society and the most valued asset is in fact Europe's cultural diversity.

The EU should encourage Community cultural action that would bridge the cultural barriers by bringing all citizens together irrespective of location, sex, caste or creed, to have access to art and culture as means of integration.

2. Which are in your view the most important cultural challenges for Europe and for the European project in the 10 years ahead? Please explain briefly your choice.

Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue - Cultural and language problems constitute a significant barrier to integration for most Europeans.

Other(s) - One of the major obstacles is the visibility of Community action in the cultural area. Member states have a significant role to play in filling the enormous gap existing in Europe between the domestic cultural agendas and the creation of an inclusive European cultural space, its promotion and development and the availability of resources.

Emergence of a European identity and citizenship

Deepening of European integration

Enlargement of the EU

3. Do you think that culture plays a role in individual personal development and social cohesion in Europe? If so, please indicate how this role could be supported at European level?

Culture plays a vital role in individual personal development and social cohesion in Europe by strengthening the individual's educational and linguistic competencies, and the integration of ideas and artistic expression.

The EU and its Member States should make an effort to achieve synergy between national as well as European cultural policies and cultural cooperation. Moreover, the EU and its Member States should provide information as regards means of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage at transnational level [libraries, archives and museums].

4. Do you see a role for culture as a stimulus for creativity in Europe and as a catalyst for innovation and knowledge? If so, please indicate how this role should be supported at European level?

There is no culture without creativity. Culture brings us together and creativity is crucial not only to our individual development but also to common innovative and economically viable success.

The EU should not only recognise the links and synergies between cultural policies and every other Community policy at the European level which directly or indirectly have an impact on cultural activities e.g. audiovisual, education, information society, internal market, trade, research and development, etc but also to identify the main players and explore existing networks involved, identify barriers and promote exchanges and best practices between cultural organisations.

B. The cultural sector, Community policies and cooperation in the European Union

1. Which are the most important challenges for the cultural sector in the European Union in the 10 years ahead?

Financing of culture - It is necessary to improve the financing of Community policies in the cultural field. European libraries (at local, national and European level) are suffering from restricted resources, however they must continue to meet current demand whilst developing and delivering services in response to opportunities provided by new technologies e.g. collection management, digitisation, staff training and social and political imperatives.

Organisation

National policy (-ies) for culture

Community policy for culture

European agenda for culture

Community culture programmes

Cultural cooperation with third countries

Expression and representativity of the sector

Legal and regulatory environment

Other(s)

2. In your opinion, which are the Community policies and their specific aspects that have the greatest impact on the activities of the cultural sector at European level or to which the cultural sector could make an important contribution? How are you affected by these policies, which developments in these policies could contribute to the development of your sector and its cross-border activities, what might this contribution consist of, serving which specific aims and with which partners? Have you identified any concerns or difficulties in relation to these policies? Which European developments could facilitate the involvement of your sector?

Culture

Education and Training

Audiovisual and Media

Sport
 Civil Society
 Freedom, security and justice (freedom of information, data protection)
 Information Society (ICT, copyright and intellectual property-related rights)
 Internal Market (Freedom of movement for professionals in the cultural sector, freedom of establishment, free movement of goods and services)
 Research, Development, Technology and Innovation
 Taxation (VAT and books, VAT on electronic information)
 Employment and Social affairs
 Competition
 Customs Union (export of cultural goods)
 Enterprise and Industry (standardisation)
 Economic and monetary union
 Enlargement
 Youth
 Development
 Regional policy
 European Neighbourhood Policy
 External assistance
 External trade
 Foreign policies
 Agriculture
 Environment
 Maritime Affairs
 Trans-European networks
 Transport

Libraries, museums and archives are cultural institutions and part of the creative industries. They form an integral part of community life, thus they should be included automatically in every relevant EU policy. EU policies should in turn stimulate cooperation between different cultural key players to maximise their impact on learning, sharing expertise and best practices.

Among the external barriers is lack of political confidence in the role memory institutions can play in the information society coupled with major variations in national planning for memory institutions in Europe. Moreover, there are shortcomings in infrastructure, especially in generalized access to powerful networks, and there are regulatory problems including issues of copyright.

3. In addition to the Community policies and areas mentioned above, have you identified other fields in which coordination or cooperation at European level could significantly contribute to the fostering of the cultural sector? If so, which one(s)? What should such coordination/cooperation consist of and what would be the added value?

Cultural institutions and libraries in particular, should be given appropriate recognition in cultural and educational EU programmes and initiatives. It is also essential to achieve synergies between Community programmes e.g. Audiovisual, Citizens for Europe, Lifelong Learning, European Higher Education Area, FP7 [eContent, IST, i2010], Structural Funds, Youth and the UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity.

There is a need for more coherencies on intellectual property rights, taxation and cultural policies.

Further cooperation between parties in both private and public sector e.g. governments, tourist agencies, community learning partnerships, businesses, universities, writers and

publishers, archives, museums, IT industry should also be reinforced to maximise access to information and knowledge as well as dissemination and exploitation activities.

C. International aspects and co-operation with international organisations

1. What is the scope of your activities and/or co-operation with and/or in third countries (outside the EU)? In which geographical areas and in which cultural sector(s)? Which should in your view be the objectives of the European Union in its relations with third countries in the field of culture? Which types of action(s) would contribute to these objectives?

EBLIDA has been involved with several projects funded by Community programmes e.g. ECUP, CECUP, TECUP, CELIP, PULMAN and CALIMERA. The latter mobilised local cultural institutions for a new role as key players in transforming innovative technologies into helpful services for ordinary citizens - putting European cultural heritage at the service of the citizen. Its network of policy makers, practitioners and suppliers covers 42 countries, including EU-25. CALIMERA has also shared knowledge and best practice with potential research partners in Canada, China, India, USA and elsewhere.

The PULMAN Network covers 37 countries to stimulate and promote sharing of policies and practices for the digital era, in public libraries and cultural organisations which operate at local and regional level.

Member states have specific ties with third countries but lack cooperation and exchange of information and best practices. There is a need for further cooperation in identifying and if possible, eliminate barriers to sharing of cultural heritage, information and knowledge.

The EU should further stimulate its member states to build up and maintain cultural relations with third countries; coordinate forms of cultural cooperation and support them by removing the most obvious obstacles and facilitate exchange of best practice and information among cultural networks.

2. What is your experience of relations/cooperation with other international or regional organisations active in the cultural sphere, such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe? How do you see the relationship between action at EU level and within the framework of those organisations?

EBLIDA has a long experience in working together with international organisations such as UNESCO, Council of Europe (Council of Europe/EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe, 2000), IFLA [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions] (Public Library Guidelines for Development and cooperation on issues relevant to libraries and archives which have an international impact e.g. WTO [World Trade Organisation], WIPO [World Intellectual Property Organisation] and WSIS [World Summit on the Information Society]), ICA (International Council on Archives), eIFL [electronic Information For Libraries] and EDITEUR (International Group for Electronic Commerce in the Book and Serials sectors).

International cooperation in the sphere of culture, which involves mainly trade in goods and services and support programmes, must be fundamentally reinforced and the vast experience acquired through it turned to good account. There is a need for greater visibility. The EU should present a united front and follow an awareness-raising campaign at national, European and international level in support of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity.

D. Arrangements for dialogue and co-operation at European level

1. Do you think there are particular difficulties in the framework of the dialogue between the cultural sector and the European institutions? If so, what are they? How do you think this dialogue should develop, both with regard to the cultural sector and the European institutions in order to make it more structured and sustainable?

Yes.

Creative industries are a growing part of the global economy. Cultural institutions and networks form part of the creative industries and they are perhaps not always recognised as economically viable.

The potential of lobbying for culture is not fully exploited.

2. What could be in your opinion the objectives common to the whole of the cultural sector at European level?

Greater cooperation/contact among Member States, Community institutions and the cultural sector is needed to be able to develop a policy and regulatory environment that ensures that all Europeans have access to their cultures.

A fair combination of financial incentives, tax measures, and intellectual property tools to support culture.

Member States to act as a single voice when acknowledging the importance of cultural diversity and addressing the cultural policies designed to promote and protect European cultural diversity.

3. Among the areas of action in which more advanced coordination between Member States of the EU might be feasible, which are the ones with significant European value added for the world of culture? Should this coordination involve all Member States or could it be developed by a group of interested countries?

Coordination should indeed involve all Member States.

Copyright and related rights

Digitization and the convergence of telecommunications sector (barriers to the cross-border use of digital content) - emerging technologies are offering new communications tools but are also challenging the Cultural exemption in international trade agreements

Barriers to mobility for goods, services and people working in the cultural sector

Taxation (VAT)

The challenge of competition

Member States' ability to enforce regulations designed to ensure that their citizens have access to cultural goods (transparency)

E. Other comments

Libraries are one of the most used and best appreciated public services. They are valued for its contribution to many aspects of life in the local community e.g. creativity, social and digital inclusion, lifelong learning, teaching and research, cultural tourism and networking. Libraries offer enormous opportunities to raise awareness of and public access to information helping local, regional, national and European authorities to communicate with citizens. They play an important role in building and preserving culture, economic regeneration and the knowledge economy as well as in the educational enterprise.