

25 June 1998

A4-0248/98

# **REPORT**

on the Green Paper on the role of libraries in the modern world

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

Rapporteur: Mrs Mirja Rynnänen

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Following the request by the Conference of Committee Chairmen, the President of Parliament announced at the sitting of 15 May 1998 that the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media had been authorized to draw up a report on the Green Paper on the role of libraries in the modern world and that the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy had been asked to deliver an opinion.

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media appointed Mrs Mirja Rynnänen rapporteur at its meeting of 31 March 1998.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 22 April, 19 May and 23 June 1998.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unopposed, with one abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Pex, chairman; Baldi, vice-chairman; Rynnänen, rapporteur; Anoveros Trias de Bes, De Coene, Escudero, Evans, Guinebertière, Günther (for Banotti), Kerr, Kristoffersen (for Boniperti), Kuhne, Leperre-Verrier, Monfils, Morgan, Pack, Perry, Tongue, Vaz da Silva and Whitehead (for Ahlqvist).

The Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy decided on 3 June 1998 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 25 June 1998.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

**A**  
**MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

**Resolution on the role of libraries in modern societies**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 30 March 1984 on the creation of a European Library<sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 27 September 1985 on collaboration between libraries in the field of data processing<sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to UNESCO's 1994 Public Library Manifest,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 November 1994 on the recommendation to the European Council: 'Europe and the global information society' and the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament and to the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'Europe's way to the information society: an action plan'<sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 1995 on the G7 conference of 25 and 26 February 1995 on the information society<sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 16 March 1995 on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision establishing 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning (COM(94)0264 - C4-0143/94 - 94/0199(COD))<sup>(5)</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment - the challenges and ways forward into the 21st century (COM(93)0700 - C3-0509/93),
- having regard to the Commission's communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a methodology for the implementation of information society applications (COM(95)0224),
- having regard to the Commission's Green Paper on Copyright and Related Rights in the Information Society (COM(95)0382 - C4-0354/95),

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 117, 30.4.1984

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 271, 23.10.1985

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 363, 19.12.1994

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 56, 6.3.1995

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 89, 10.4.1995

- having regard to the proposal for a Council decision on the adoption of a multiannual programme to promote the linguistic diversity of the Community in the Information Society (COM(95)0486 - C4-0152/96)<sup>(1)</sup>,
  - having regard to the White Paper on Education and Training - Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society (COM(95)0590 - C4-0597/95),
  - having regard to the interim report of January 1996 and the final report of April 1997 of the high-level group of experts on building the European information society for all,
  - having regard to the Green Paper 'Living and Working in the Information Society : People First' (COM(96)0389 final), adopted on 24 July 1996,
  - having regard to the Council resolution of 4 April 1995 on culture and the multimedia<sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission communication Learning in the information society - Action plan for a European education initiative (1996-1998) (COM(96)0471 - C4-0528/96),
  - having regard to the Council resolution of 25 July 1996 on electronic publishing and libraries (96/C 242/02)<sup>(3)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 March 1997 on the Information Society, Culture and Education<sup>(4)</sup>,
  - having regard to Articles 126 and 128 of the Treaty establishing the European Community,
  - having regard to Rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media (A4-0248/98),
- A. whereas the possession and mastery of information promote economic, social and cultural integration and whereas therefore it is appropriate to organize and guarantee free access to information for the citizen,
- B. whereas culture generates a thirst for new knowledge and, in this context, literature occupies a special position as a means of linguistic enrichment,
- C. whereas the European model of the information society requires account to be taken not only of economic and technological factors but also of the democratic, social and cultural dimensions of the development of the information society, and whereas instruments are needed to realize the cultural dimension which was endorsed in the Maastricht Treaty and particularly to realize the active citizenship provided for in the Amsterdam Treaty,

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 364, 4.12.1996

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 247, 23.9.1995

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 242, 21.8.1996

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 115, 14.4.1997

- D. whereas in the draft Directive on copyright in the information society, Member States are given the option of providing for certain exceptions to the exclusive reproduction right concerning:
- specific acts of reproduction made by establishments accessible to the public, which are not for direct or indirect economic advantage;
- as well as the option of providing exceptions to the exclusive rights of reproduction and communication to the public concerning:
- use for the sole purpose of illustration for teaching or scientific research, to the extent justified by the non-commercial purpose to be achieved;
  - uses for the benefit of visually or hearing impaired persons of a non-commercial nature; whereas a fair balance of rights and interests must be safeguarded while the exceptions should be exercised in accordance with the international obligations; whereas such exceptions may not be applied in a way which prejudices the legitimate interests of the right-holder or which conflicts with the normal exploitation of his work,
- E. whereas, because of changes in communications technology, growing quantities of knowledge and cultural material are stored on networks or in some other digital form and access to them must be guaranteed,
- F. whereas libraries should act as a bridge between traditional information media and the new media, thereby enabling them to complement rather than excluding each other,
- G. whereas libraries and information services have an irreplaceable and growing role in organizing access to knowledge in a context in which the number of communications media is multiplying,
- H. whereas there are some 240 000 library staff in Europe who meet the most disparate needs for knowledge and cultural material at nearly 100 000 library outlets, and whereas altogether library services account for around 0.4% of the European Union's GDP,
- I. whereas it is possible to link public libraries to form a network close to all citizens, comparable to schools, to convey knowledge and culture - and this has already been done in some Member States - one of their fundamental functions being to provide the indispensable basic knowledge for active citizenship, rendering it accessible for all, irrespective of place of residence, educational background or social status; whereas this helps to create a democratic, open and transparent information society,
- J. whereas trained librarians possess unique skills in administering and processing information, which make it possible for all members of the public to gain access to knowledge and to use it, which is increasingly important in the information society and as the significance of information technology increases,
- K. whereas libraries at schools and other educational establishments provide support for education as an increasingly important element in their own communities, given that schools are adopting teaching methods based on learners searching for knowledge independently; these methods are also characteristic of the growing sector of adult education, so that libraries are also a vital support service for lifelong learning,

- L. whereas national libraries have a special duty to collect, preserve and catalogue the published literature and often also other types of documents of their respective countries, which is a precondition for preserving the cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations,
- M. whereas it is impossible to carry out research or to study without research library services, and whereas improving the quality and quantity of these services substantially improves the standard of results,
- N. whereas more and more information is also needed by business as an element in its economic activity, and whereas small and medium-sized businesses in particular are increasingly making use of publicly funded library resources; whereas the research departments and information services of large businesses are likewise constantly exploiting large research libraries,
- O. whereas in addition to the above, numerous libraries for different user groups or specializing in particular fields, such as libraries for the visually impaired, administrative libraries and repository libraries, are operating in Europe; in some countries, private libraries also operate which are based on organizations with the legal form of a foundation, many of them being of major historical importance,
- P. whereas, although for historical reasons the development of libraries in different countries has produced different results, challenges facing libraries on account of social developments should now also be considered at European level and an effort should be made to safeguard for all European citizens basic access to knowledge and culture through libraries,
- Q. whereas libraries have a special role to play in consolidating children's reading skills, providing them with cultural services and maintaining the general level of literacy, and whereas with regard to these duties too they face new challenges at a time when the literacy of the population as a whole needs to be extended to include media literacy ('mediacy'),
- R. whereas libraries are of special significance in keeping alive a population's own language, literature and culture and whereas in this field there are numerous opportunities for cooperation with museums, archives and people active in culture, such as writers,
- S. whereas libraries are also unique and spiritually enriching windows onto other cultures and ways of life, as they make available for use books, periodicals, films and other videos, music and electronic documents conveying to the user unfamiliar environments,
- T. whereas at their best public libraries also act as a central social forum for their own community where many kinds of local citizens' activities can be brought together very comprehensively and in a spirit of community development,
- U. whereas libraries provide services particularly to those people who are able and willing to do extra work for the sake of their personal development and to seek new content for their lives, and who are thereby actively helping to build a new citizens' Europe; whereas such people are of importance to the communities in which they work and live,
- V. whereas libraries contribute substantially to the establishment of various types of standards for depositing, organizing, compatibility and transmission of information, and the volume

and significance of this work has increased in the age of networked information; whereas there is a major need for cooperation with other administrative fields here too,

- W. whereas the advent of licensed electronic publications on the information market represents a broad field of work of a new kind for all libraries, and whereas the licensing procedure, together with its consequences and safeguards for the interests of copyright-holders, need to be clarified both at European level and in the Member States,
- X. whereas improving the quality of the telematic infrastructure is an important technological condition for enabling libraries to offer effectively to their users information available on networks,
- Y. whereas libraries also need to resolve special problems regarding the conservation of material, such as the need to use permanent paper and the long-term preservation of documents recorded in different technical formats at different times and to ensure that they are usable,
- Z. whereas common methods are needed for evaluating European libraries and gathering statistics concerning them, and the development of these methods is so far incomplete,
- AA. whereas libraries are the most important, or at least a vital, client group for the various sectors of production such as producers of integrated library systems and certain publishers, and whereas broadening library work and improving its standard is also reflected positively in these sectors' economics,
- BB. whereas the Telematics for Libraries programme which began in 1990 and has funded nearly 100 projects of various types has initiated many significant cooperation processes between Member States' libraries and at other levels between them and whereas the continuation of this process must be ensured in the 5th Programme of Research and Technological Development although it does not incorporate a separate libraries programme,
- CC. whereas the Europe-wide networking of libraries called for, inter alia, in its Resolution of 30 March 1984 on the creation of a European Library<sup>(1)</sup> and its resolution of 13 March 1997 on the Information Society, Culture and Education<sup>(2)</sup> has so far mainly got under way by means of operational contacts, for example in the form of Telematics for Libraries cooperation projects, cooperation between national libraries and parliamentary libraries, and cooperation among European library organizations, but technical networking remains rudimentary,
- DD. whereas the realization of another objective set in the same report - transforming the cultural heritage into digital form - has begun in some countries as far as libraries are concerned but much work still remains to be done,

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 117, 30.4.1984

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 115, 14.4.1997

- EE. whereas in relation to the challenges of a modern society libraries are so far under-resourced and whereas inadequate resources result in inefficient use of the cultural, educational and research capital accumulated in them,
1. Considers that appropriate account should be taken of libraries in the European Union's strategies for the information society, its plans and programmes for cultural, content, education and information policy and budgetary decisions relating to them, as one of the most important systems which afford access to knowledge and culture;
  2. Recommends that the Member States likewise incorporate libraries in corresponding strategies, plans, programmes and budgets;
  3. Recommends that Member States adopt appropriate measures to enable libraries to play an active role in providing access to information and communicating knowledge;
  4. Recommends that Member States enable libraries to acquire works even in small or more expensive editions which contribute to cultural and linguistic diversity and can be made available to a wider public through libraries;
  5. Calls on the Commission to accelerate work on the Green Paper on the Role of Libraries in the Information Society which is under preparation and engage in detailed activities on the basis of its proposals and consideration; as a thoroughly prepared document, it will provide a sound basis for debating how libraries can meet the challenges of the information society and citizenship thereof at many levels;
  6. Calls on the Commission unequivocally to take account of libraries and their role as an information source for members of the public when resolving copyright issues. The Directive on copyright should preserve the existing balance among the various parties and harmonize the rights of users, while exceptions should be applied in accordance with international obligations; considers, furthermore, that such exceptions must not be applied in a way which damages the legitimate interests of right-holders or the normal exploitation of their works;
  7. Calls on the Commission to continue to support the networking of European libraries in its 5th Programme of Research and Technological Development to enable them to continue to improve the effectiveness of the sharing of professional know-how through joint projects and the establishment of technical links;
  8. Calls on the Commission to continue to provide support under the 5th Programme of Research and Technological Development for the drafting of common standards for processing, conserving and transferring information and ensuring its compatibility, and calls on the Commission's other bodies responsible for these standards to take account of the needs and expertise of libraries in their own work;
  9. Calls on the Commission to support pan-European cooperation to solve problems relating to the long-term preservation and usability of material by establishing a body of the clearing house type to provide information, to campaign and to promote exchanges of experience and by encouraging cooperation between parties in the private and public sector (publishers, paper manufacturers, preservation suppliers, libraries and archives);

10. Recommends that the Member States provide national funding for digitization and preservation programmes for their own material in order to preserve this cultural heritage for future generations in a form which will render it accessible to as many people as possible and which will also enable it to be used abroad, thanks to common standards;
11. Calls on the Commission and Member States to initiate studies of the principles of operation of licensing systems for the use of electronic documents, the costs of such systems and their impact on libraries, and particularly of how small and financially weak libraries can give their users access to electronic documents;
12. Calls on the Commission 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;
13. Calls on the Commission and Member States to negotiate on systems by means of which it would be possible, in accordance with the principles of legal deposit law, to ensure the gathering, preservation and cataloguing of material produced multinationally and internationally both in the respective countries and in Europe, irrespective of the form of the material;
14. Recommends that the Member States 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 pertaining to electronic documents, which are becoming increasingly prevalent;
15. Recommends that the Member States provide basic public-library services such as lending the library's own material and permitting the use of reference works, free of charge, as recommended in UNESCO's Public Library Manifest, as libraries are by their nature services to the general public, thereby stressing the importance of equal access to information and culture;
16. Recommends to the Member States that important material produced with the aid of tax revenue, from legislation to local-government decisions and from statistics to national bibliographies, should be made accessible through libraries for members of the public and other users irrespective of the form in which it has been produced, and urges in particular that it be ascertained what advantages there would be in producing on-line versions of this material;
17. Recommends that the Member States adapt their training and further training systems for library staff better to developments in the information society; in particular, library staff must have the necessary technical skills to filter out from an ever growing mass of information the material requested by users, who are increasingly demanding;
18. Calls on the Commission 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;

19. Calls on the Commission and Member States to consider whether European information points at libraries could be set up in other Member States, as experience of providing information about Europe at libraries has been favourable;
20. Calls on the Commission to study how library services throughout the Community can be assessed and statistics compiled concerning them in such a way as to enable what they have to offer to be compared;
21. Recommends to the Member States that Members of the European Parliament be granted a right of access to services of the library of the national parliament in their own states, where this does not currently exist;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council.

## **B**

### **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

#### **I. Why an own-initiative report?**

The role of libraries has been outlined from various angles in the EU since Parliament's 1984 Resolution on the Creation of a European Library. In 1990, the Telematics for Libraries programme was launched, and it has been a prominent factor in the development of European library cooperation. Issues concerning libraries have been discussed in various kinds of general document relating to culture, education and research, notably the Morgan report on the Information Society, Culture and Education. On that basis, the Commission set to work on a Green Paper on the role of libraries in the information society.

The aim of this own-initiative report is to stimulate debate concerning the role of libraries in the information society in 1998. This is a time when important decisions are being prepared, which will have a decisive impact on the future of libraries. The most important of them is the Directive on copyright. Decisions will also soon have to be taken on the budget headings concerning libraries in the 5th Programme of Research and Technological Development. The Green Paper on the Role of Libraries in Modern Society which the Commission is drafting will provide significantly more detailed information than this report for use in the further debate and will lead to a new round of debate and decision-making.

#### **II. The EU's experience of library projects**

The Telematics for Libraries programme coordinated by DG XIII/4 has supported 87 main projects and six platforms since 1990. Around 350 parties - about half of them libraries - have been involved in the projects. It is worth noting that greater interaction has arisen between projects than would normally be the case.

Both the profiles and the results of the projects have varied widely, and they are reflected in many ways in Europe's libraries. Standards have been developed (UNIMARC; EDIFACT), as have freeware tools, for example in connection with the Z39.50 standard (EUROPAGATE, SOCKER), and technical know-how has been transferred from area to area (FACIT, MOBILE, DEDICATE, LISTED). Information has been gathered concerning the degree of maturity and usability of technical applications (SPINTEL). Practical cooperation between libraries (CoBRA, BIBLINK, NEDLIB) has been an important priority. The series of publications entitled 'Libraries in the Information Society' was launched in 1995, and by spring 1998 already numbered 14 publications. Various platforms have played a vital role; ECUP (European Platform for Copyright User) may be particularly singled out here.

The value of the Telematics for Libraries programme is most apparent in the development of standards, the creation of prototypes and promotion of the use of technical solutions. It has significantly increased cooperation among European countries' libraries and indirectly also between library organizations. It has also increased cooperation between libraries and their commercial partners. All this combined has moreover served to give libraries a higher profile both at European level and in the Member States.

### III. The significance of knowledge and access to it

In the information society, knowledge is a vital resource and information the most important raw material. Accordingly, more attention than previously is now being devoted to knowledge, its transmission and usability, access to it, and the institutions which deal in it. Their role needs to be reviewed. At European Community level, particular consideration has been given, from various angles, to the media, but also to education and research. When the subject of libraries started to be debated in the Community, the emphasis was on making more effective use of the cultural, educational and research capital accumulated in them.

*The unique function of libraries is to acquire, organize, offer for use and preserve publicly available material irrespective of the form in which it is packaged (print, cassette, CD-ROM, network form) in such a way that, when it is needed, it can be found and put to use. No other institution carries out this long-term, systematic work.*

Libraries are a meeting point for many processes and phenomena relating to the information society, although they are still underestimated at present. The substantive impact of libraries makes itself felt more widely than might be assumed on the basis of their financial volume. Libraries will be more central to the information society than they were to industrial society, a status which they will attain partly in the form of virtual libraries.

In modern societies libraries are particularly important as a means of ensuring that all citizens have access to the knowledge and culture they wish. It is extremely important to organize access to their material; this has a role to play in realizing citizenship, as have periodicals which keep readers up to date on legislation, other administrative decisions and events. Without such services, society cannot be democratic, open and transparent, because it cannot be assumed that all citizens will acquire a wide range of material. Investing in libraries means investing in democracy and equality.

A special group from the point of view of access to knowledge is immigrants. When labour moves between countries, libraries must have material - particularly newspapers - in the immigrants' languages. They must be able to follow events in their home country in their mother tongue. Libraries also bear a measure of responsibility for the formation of the cultural identity of immigrants' children.

As it becomes more common for knowledge to be conveyed through networks, the role of libraries in providing access to knowledge changes, but does not decline. Some people obtain information direct from the network, so that the proportion of total information accounted for by libraries' information services and other sources of information at libraries is likely to fall. This renders libraries' work as organizers of knowledge, including knowledge available through networks, all the more important. Professional assistance is still needed to obtain information from previously unknown areas. It has also been estimated that, as the use of knowledge has become more intensive, this is producing so many new library contacts that the level of use will be maintained or will even increase.

The information society perspective does not mean that libraries' traditional work is declining in volume. They continue to provide a service by preserving the cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations. Some libraries are actually specializing in this: national libraries by means of their own input, and historic libraries such as that in Coimbra and the Strahov monastic library in

Prague in their own way. There is substantial scope for cooperation with museums and archives here. New technology can also be put to use in carrying out existing functions.

In the future as in the past, libraries will both serve as information services and operate in the cultural field, and they have very close relations with various types of study. To some extent libraries encounter difficulties in serving many different needs, as it has been difficult to see them as a single whole from within the various parent organizations. However, the development of the information society is clearly raising their general profile as an important part of the information superhighway along which knowledge and culture travel.

*As libraries have such vital multiple roles to play in the information society, their resources must be improved. With the resources currently at their disposal, they cannot do everything which is increasingly being expected of them. Library funding should be completely reviewed throughout Europe in the light of the information society. This applies to all types of library. Knowledge about the Member States needs to be nurtured. According to recent research, for example, the financial gulf between public libraries is growing: those which are being starved of funding are limping along behind the well-resourced (Thorhauge J., Larsen G., Thun H-P & Albrechtsen H.: Public Libraries and the Information Society. Ed. M. Segbert. Published by the European Commission, DG XIII/E.4, 1997. EUR 17648 EN).*

#### **IV. Understanding information is an individual process**

The growing volume of information available is of no benefit unless it is converted into knowledge and hence generates new knowledge, production and culture. Many new production sectors, particularly content production, are heavily dependent on the ability of the human mind to create something new. This process, which is central to the information society, is performed individually. It cannot be forced, but it can be promoted by providing it with material and opportunities. Libraries, along with other cultural institutions, schools and the media, form part of the chain which nourishes the human mind and keeps it on the move.

Another factor vital to intellectual activity is culture. To some extent, it makes its influence felt more indirectly than knowledge, but it is impossible to imagine how people's creative powers could be fully activated without the impact of culture, which extends into the depths of the mind.

It may be predicted that in the future all citizens of the European information society will need libraries at some stage in their lives, whether during their school-days, as students, in their social activities, their leisure pursuits or their work. The reason is quite simple: the use of knowledge is becoming increasingly intensive. In addition to general transmission of knowledge, for example by the media and in the form of information provided by various institutions themselves, a service is needed from which one can obtain answers to precisely one's own questions. From the point of view of members of the public, the be-all and end-all of libraries is to reply to the individual's individual queries using all their material and professional skill. On the other hand, libraries are also the scene of many unexpected finds, as it is possible to stumble upon material in their collections which one did not know one was looking for.

#### **V. The many types of media which exist and literacy**

The traditional image of the library is that it is a place where books are kept, but in modern-day society this is no longer accurate. In many research libraries, books have already been a marginal part

of the material for decades, because knowledge is renewed so rapidly. In recent years the most up-to-date libraries have set up virtual libraries of their own, drawing on various kinds of network material. At national libraries, old literature, manuscripts, pictures, maps and other material have been converted into digital form.

Libraries may - and should - contain all media suitable for use at them. The experience available from music is as valid as that provided by reading, and knowledge obtained from video is just as good as that which is accessed in writing. Different storage formats are appropriate to different contents: telephone directories are subject to change, and it makes sense to store them electronically. The most important access criterion at libraries is the quality of the material. Thus libraries primarily provide content rather than packaging according to particular models.

The experience of libraries has been that new media do not supersede old. On the contrary, the various media support one another in the library context.

Despite the above, at general public libraries and school libraries the emphasis is on literacy and literature. Full citizenship and participation in other activities in modern society require literacy and a good command of language. Libraries continue to give children a means of consolidating their literacy, as well as challenging adults to improve theirs. Network information, meanwhile, challenges people to read in a new way, a critical attitude to the media being a prime concern here. The media equivalent of literacy is sometimes called 'mediacy'. As providers of public Internet stations, libraries can significantly enhance the network skills of members of the public; experience of network teaching organized by libraries in various countries is very encouraging.

## **VI. Copyright and libraries**

Electronic documents will be the biggest and most many-sided challenge facing libraries in the near future. The biggest threat is also associated with them. The *Commission proposal for a Directive on copyright and related rights* (COM(97)0628 final - 97/0359(COD), published on 10 December 1997) will have a big impact on libraries' work and their ability to carry out their service obligations. From the point of view of the public, there is a danger that the proposal may threaten access to knowledge stored in electronic form through libraries and indeed through archives as well.

The proposal has been criticized mainly because it alters the balance with regard to copyright. The rights of the right-holder are increased at the expense of users.

Libraries consider that members of the public should continue to have the right to read on the screen and to browse in electronic libraries and archives just as freely as they can now read books. However, in this respect the proposal for a Directive renders library and archive services dependent on any licences which may be granted by the right-holder. Yet the right to knowledge must not be subject to licence.

Under the proposal, Member States would, if they wish, have the right to make certain exceptions to copyright-holders' right to determine the use of their works. In other words, according to the proposal users' rights do not need to be harmonized. The exceptions are very narrowly defined; notable among them is the only limited use proposed for educational purposes ('classroom use') and research, but not study. Apart from anything else, this is contrary to the principles of lifelong learning, which cannot be widely practised unless students can themselves actively use knowledge

on their own initiative. At libraries, there is a desire to extend this exception to include the use of material for purposes of study, teaching and research.

Library managers are absolutely in support of a solution to the problem of copyright on networks such as to safeguard all parties' interests. However, solutions must also be considered from the point of view of free access to knowledge and culture. This is an essential precondition for new achievements in intellectual work. Raising barriers to the use of digital information and cultural products and the strict circumscription of their use at libraries would impair intellectual productivity in Europe.

It is worth noting that, in the debate on the proposal for a Directive, libraries have been virtually the only participants representing users.

The Directive should preserve the existing balance between right-holders and users and formulate clearly exceptions to exclusive copyright in order to guarantee the rights of individual users and libraries. This would be to Europe's advantage.

## **VII. Licences to use electronic documents**

In order to meet users' needs, libraries must make more use of electronic documents than in the past. In future, therefore, they will have to negotiate with producers concerning licences to use them. This will happen regardless of the decisions reached concerning the Directive on copyright. Licence payments also constitute new expenses. This is a good example of how, as libraries become one of the focuses of the information society, they will need their own resources.

Licences are a new field for libraries; this is a contract law matter. Some national libraries and other large libraries have cooperated with one another in obtaining broad joint licences, experience of which should be pooled. The as yet limited experience of small libraries suggests that licences for individual products such as CD-ROMs, with their various terms and conditions, entail a lot of work of an unfamiliar kind for libraries. It needs to be debated what is reasonable from the point of view of libraries, what options there are for joint licences and what all this will cost in future.

## **VIII. Other challenges presented by Internet material**

Internet material presents other kinds of challenges to libraries, too. First and foremost among them is the provision of open access, as only few people have as yet managed to gain access to the Internet by means of their own resources. Experience in countries where Internet stations have been established at libraries has mostly been positive. It has been felt to be an advantage that guidance can be obtained from the library, while at the same time other information and cultural material can be used there. The longer the possibility of using the Internet has been available, the more advantage has been taken of it by atypical user groups such as women and the elderly. Thus libraries are seen as good places to cultivate network skills.

There is much food for thought - and subject-matter for decision - in the varying standard and content of Internet documents, together with the fact that all of them become available to every user as a single package and on the same footing. One advantage from the point of view of libraries is that large and small, rich and poor libraries can gain access to exactly the same material through the Internet, which in particular places poorly resourced libraries in a position of equality. This situation may even persist once part of the material currently available free of charge on the Internet becomes

commercial. Basic information for citizens, such as legislation and indeed EU material may continue to be made available free of charge on the Internet, as may many kinds of information material to do with tourism, for instance.

Material which presents problems at libraries as elsewhere includes pornography, damaging information such as bomb-making instructions and deliberate disinformation. We have generally become accustomed to the fact that libraries contain only selected material, whereas on the Internet it is not possible to exclude certain types. The filter programs which have been developed to date are not very convincing, as they mechanically filter out material which they ought to let through. One example which has been cited is a program which denies access to pages containing the word 'breast', with the result that it is impossible to access medical web pages containing information about breast cancer.

Libraries' experience of the use of Internet pages containing undesirable material reflects the various countries' cultures. In the Nordic countries, the positive aspects of Internet documents are so highly valued that, even though a number of transgressions have come to light, there is no climate of opinion in favour of instituting controls. In certain other countries, the use of the Internet at libraries has been questioned because of such incidents, or there have at least been calls for the introduction of filter programs.

Libraries ought to carry out their two basic duties with regard to Internet material as in other contexts: they should preserve it for future generations and they should organize it in such a way that it is possible to find what one wants. They are impeded in both these tasks by the fact that Internet material is constantly changing. It is also difficult to ascertain who is responsible for long-term preservation because part of the material on the Internet is produced supranationally or in cooperation - for example, the EU's own publications. In the legal deposit laws of various European countries, a position has already been adopted on how a cross-section of Internet material of types commonly produced in the countries concerned should be preserved, but the situation remains in flux.

The present chaotic nature of Internet material demonstrates what valuable work libraries do by cataloguing, classifying and indexing books and other documents with a view to later retrieval. Similarly, libraries currently seek to organize Internet material using traditional librarians' methods, i.e. helping to find content on the Internet. Even the best existing search engines (Alta Vista, Lycos, etc.) primarily look for particular combinations of words. In addition, there is a manifest need for selective and sustained search services which provide access to material on the basis of professional librarians' definitions of acceptable network material.

## **IX. The physical preservation of library collections requires techniques**

Large library collections require a major physical and technical preservation effort. This is particularly true of national and other libraries which have duties to preserve material. Acid paper is a huge problem, because as it oxidizes it destroys the text written on it. Not all the material which is currently being printed meets the requirements for long-term preservation, either. As yet we do not have any dependable information as to how long it will be possible to preserve documents using modern techniques. Libraries and producers of material who often cooperate with them will need to make large investments in order to preserve it in a usable state. Among other outgoings, converting large quantities of documents from one format to another, which entails transferring them to some

other storage medium, is an on-going and major expense. Examples of different types include placing newspapers on microfilm and digitization of whole library collections.

Preserving material is primarily a national responsibility. However, there is also a need to promote training, dissemination of professional expertise, and general awareness of the problems of preserving the cultural heritage at European level.

#### **X. A library network remains a potential resource**

Libraries operate most effectively as a network. A functioning network ensures that library users can obtain what they need from any other library if it is unavailable at their local library. Networks operate beyond the limits of research libraries and public libraries, and also internationally. Inter-library lending is largely based on previous cooperation, through which common rules and standards have been adopted and measures have been taken to give libraries adequate information about one another's collections. The Internet has opened up new possibilities, particularly as regards access to bibliographical and location information.

To libraries themselves, the significance of networking goes beyond inter-library lending. They can also disseminate their expertise and thus improve their own work. If use is made of the Internet, it is even possible to ask colleagues elsewhere for assistance in solving individual difficult questions concerning information services; there have already been examples of this happening. The growth in cooperation between countries in recent years has accentuated the importance of this dimension.

It is felt to be a problem that many research libraries in Europe are only available for use by the particular organizations to which they are attached. Thus only limited benefit can be derived from their collections and expertise. In the age of the Internet, use of their material ought to be debated as a fundamental issue.

However, networking still has a long way to go in Europe. It may be regarded as one of the biggest areas of unexploited potential in the library field. Relatively little progress has so far been made, for example, in using the Internet to provide access to general catalogues.

#### **XI. Libraries and the economy**

Libraries account for 0.4% of the European Community's GDP and employ around 240 000 people. In the information society their economic volume ought undoubtedly to be increased - in this respect they are no different to other sectors dealing with information. As knowledge becomes an increasingly important factor in production, it becomes apparent that its dissemination is beneficial to society and that it is worth investing public funds in it. Libraries are vital public services. In the mid-1980s it was observed that libraries' collections were being put to very inadequate use in the EU, and constituted a neglected treasure-house. This capital cannot be made productive without fresh investment. The Telematics for Libraries programme was one response to the problem, investing systematically in improving the use of libraries' existing resources.

Libraries cannot be rendered economically viable; in this respect they resemble primary schools. Various attempts have been made, but even the most ambitious - the US Library of Congress - has already changed course. In some fields library services can be placed on a commercial footing, but this is a marginal phenomenon and does not apply to all libraries.

However, if the right approach is adopted, libraries can attain a very high cost-benefit ratio. Statistics indicate that in one country less than 1% of public spending is allocated to public libraries, but as many as two thirds of the population use them.

One factor which is clearly making for economic growth in connection with libraries is the aforementioned licence fees for electronic documents; another is digitization of catalogues and original material. A separate industry has grown up around libraries, comprising for example producers of integrated library systems and of catalogues on CD-ROM or networks. They still have a large market in Europe, but they also face very strong competition from America. The long-term preservation of material and for example solving the problems of acid paper are also extra business opportunities for firms in the relevant sector.

Libraries are the most important customers for some publishers and are vital to many others. Moreover, libraries also serve to market the products of content producers. Especially in small language areas, those involved in the book trade admit that libraries play an important role in encouraging reading and thus maintaining literature production as a whole. Sales to libraries may also be accounted a positive factor in ensuring the viability of quality products whose commercial potential is uncertain. A similar situation could be created with regard to videos and films. This would benefit areas where there are no cinemas.

To telecommunications operators, libraries may be pioneers in the introduction of the Internet, since, in the best cases, they are for example the first in their locality to require fixed cables for Internet connections. If libraries are prepared to keep up to date, they may also open up markets for multimedia products.

Libraries can have a major impact in their own communities and on the everyday life of their users, extending to economic aspects. Reading, music and other leisure pursuits which are supported by libraries maintain and renew people's capacity for activity. This is particularly apparent in economically declining areas. Research has shown that in such cases quality library services can be one of the principal lifelines of local inhabitants. Libraries can also actively assist attempts to find new survival strategies for a community. They can equally help unemployed individuals in their own efforts to learn new things and seek out new opportunities - another meeting point between lifelong learning and libraries.

## **XII. Charges**

Charges for the use of public libraries vary from country to country. Sometimes there is a charge for a library card, sometimes one has to pay to borrow particular types of material (videos, music). In all countries fines and reservation and similar charges are levied.

Charges have been shown mainly to affect use; the debate concerning this has focused primarily on lending charges. Opponents of such charges observe that their biggest effect is to reduce borrowing, so that a low level of use is made of libraries and their collections. In comparison, the revenue from lending charges is of relatively little benefit and does not solve libraries' financial problems.

In many countries, it is currently being debated whether charges should be made for use of libraries' catalogues - particularly national bibliographies - or whether people should be allowed to use them free of charge. Critics consider it unreasonable to levy charges because the information has been collected using tax revenue and forms part of the national cultural heritage which belongs to all.

Libraries have their own views concerning access to and charges for other material produced using tax revenue; information held in the form of maps and statistics has been mentioned in this connection, for example. Such material is often very valuable to library users, and ought to be generally available, if only from the point of view of democracy. If such information is placed on the Internet, this could substantially improve general access to it, because distribution costs would then be low.

The debate concerning access to material produced using tax revenue should be pursued to completion, in order to arrive at a greater consensus as to what should be provided free of charge and what can reasonably be charged for.