

EBLIDA – «Building library networks in Europe»

The European Bureau for Library, Information and Documentation Associations – or EBLIDA – was established in 1992 to promote the interests of libraries and other archives and documentation associations to EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The membership of EBLIDA is composed of library associations and institutions from Europe and is represented by an Executive Committee of ten members and a president. The President for the period 2007–2009 is Gerald Leitner, who is also the Secretary General of the Austrian Library Association. The EBLIDA secretariat is hosted by the Dutch Library Association in The Hague.

Central to the strategy of EBLIDA is to ensure a legislative framework in Europe where libraries and other cultural institutions can continue to provide access to information, not least in the digital environment. With the advance of ICT at the beginning of the 1990's and the intention to create a single market in Europe copyright and intellectual property rights became an important item on the political agenda. It became clear that the legislation would have to change to incorporate new technologies and that digital media need very different solutions than those we were used to in the analogue world.

Over the last 15 years there has been a battle to keep the “delicate balance” between the legitimate interests of right holders and the broader interests of society in general. For libraries and other cultural institutions it has proved a difficult time where much new legislation had limited the possibilities for cultural material to become part of the public domain – the Public Lending Right directive from 1992 (or to give its correct name – Council directive on rental right and lending right and on certain rights related to copyright in the field of intellectual property) could adversely effect the economic situation of public libraries, the term directive from 1993 which set the duration of authors rights to 70 years (many member states had 50 years prior to the directive), the database directive from 1996 and the Information Society directive from 2001. EBLIDA has lobbied intensely on all these directives, striving to put forward the viewpoints of libraries and show how these legislative proposals might hinder libraries in providing information services to European citizens.

In 2006 the European Commission launched the European Digital Library and with it the problems of copyright have become apparent once again – and the question remains how to avoid a 20th century black hole of literary and scientific works in digital format. Much will undoubtedly be solved by contracts and licensing agreements, but it will also be necessary to find practical solutions for projects of mass digitization which will allow cultural institutions to open up their collections and make them available on the internet. The value to society of these collections should not be undervalued and will also define the role of libraries in years to come.

While the legal aspects remain central to EBLIDA, the organization has defined four other key strategic areas for the work of the organization: digitization and on-line access, life-long learning and education, culture and information society and professional education. These are areas where library associations need to work together at the European level to achieve the best results for the members we represent. For digitization there is a need for coordination and prioritization at the European level – what we might call a European Collections Strategy. We need to ensure interoperability between diverse resources not just between libraries, but between libraries, archives and museums. The European Commission had decided not to fund the creation of digital content, leaving it to the member states to fund these projects, encouraging private-public partnerships.

Lifelong learning and continuing education are also at the heart of the knowledge economy and EBLIDA feels that public and academic libraries and other cultural institutions have a pivotal role to play in supporting this agenda – through e-learning, distance learning and providing resources for those engaged in learning processes. It is vital for these institutions to underline their importance in LLL and education and that we are able to contribute to the European agenda. For all types of library institutions there is a challenge to meet in this area.

For library associations, organizations and institutions it is important to help to facilitate dialogue between theory and practice in the library and information sector and ensure that research is incorporated into the daily practice of librarians. EBLIDA will also continue to monitor the Bologna process and how higher education is aligned in the European community.

The cultural agenda in Europe remains broad, but also here we feel that libraries have a role to play. In many European member states libraries are one of the primary disseminators of culture, literature, music and so forth and by establishing various cross-border cooperations (of which the European Digital Library is a good example) we can help establish a vibrant European cultural scene.

EBLIDA works with other European and international library associations such as IFLA, LIBER, EUCLID and NAPLE and hopes to strengthen these forms of cooperation in the coming years. It is important to foster dialogue between different stakeholders and different sectors in order to achieve the best possible platform for libraries, archives and documentation associations to position themselves in the knowledge society.



Andrew Cranfield

Director, EBLIDA

Résumé

Français

L'«European Bureau for Library, Information and Documentation Associations» (EBLIDA) a été créé en 1992. Il se donne pour objectif de représenter les intérêts des bibliothèques et des archives auprès des instances déterminantes de l'UE. Des associations européennes de bibliothèques et d'institutions similaires font partie d'EBLIDA, dont le Bureau est géré par un comité exécutif de dix membres. EBLIDA s'engage en faveur de la création de bases légales. L'accès aux informations et les questions relatives au droit d'auteur sont devenus toujours plus importants avec l'arrivée des nouvelles technologies de l'information. La jurisprudence doit intégrer les nouvelles technologies et les médias numériques dans la législation.

EBLIDA a effectué un vaste lobbying pour attirer l'attention des décideurs sur la portée de réglementations dans ce domaine et sur les implications de celles-ci pour le libre accès à l'information. Après le lancement de la Bibliothèque numérique européenne par la Commission européenne en 2006, s'est à nouveau posée et de manière urgente la question du droit d'auteur. La numérisation massive de biens culturels pose de nombreux problèmes juridiques.

En plus de l'engagement en faveur de bases légales, EBLIDA définit quatre domaines clés dans sa stratégie: la numérisation et l'accès en ligne/l'apprentissage continu et la formation/la culture et la société de l'information/la formation spécialisée. Dans tous ces domaines, une collaboration de toutes les bibliothèques européennes est requise, faute de quoi les divers problèmes qui se présentent n'auront pas de solution. EBLIDA cherche la collaboration avec d'autres associations européennes et internationales de bibliothèques, comme IFLA, LIBER, EUCLID et NAPLE. Ces prochaines années, il faudra encore renforcer ces collaborations. L'objectif à long terme est et restera un positionnement clair et un rôle fort des associations de bibliothécaires, d'archivistes et de documentalistes au sein de notre société du savoir.

Deutsch

Das «European Bureau for Library, Information and Documentation Associations» (EBLIDA) wurde 1992 gegründet. Es setzt sich zum Ziel, die Interessen von Bibliotheken und Archiven bei massgeblichen EU-Gremien zu vertreten. Im EBLIDA nehmen europäische Bibliotheksverbände und -institutionen Einsitz; geführt wird das Bureau durch ein zehnköpfiges Exekutivkomitee.

EBLIDA setzt sich für die Schaffung von gesetzlichen Grundlagen ein. Der Zugang zu Informationen und Fragen rund um das Urheberrecht sind mit dem Aufkommen der IT immer wichtiger geworden. Die Rechtsprechung muss die neuen Technologien und digitale Medien in die Gesetzgebung integrieren.

EBLIDA hat ausgiebig Lobbying betrieben, um die Entscheidungsträger auf die Tragweite von Regelungen in diesem Bereich und auf die Auswirkungen für den freien Zugang zu Informationen hinzuweisen. Nach der Lancierung der European Digital Library durch die Europäische Kommission im Jahr 2006 stellte sich die Frage nach dem Urheberrecht erneut und dringend. Die Massendigitalisierung von Kulturgütern stellt im rechtlichen Bereich zahlreiche Probleme.

Neben dem Engagement für gesetzliche Grundlagen hat EBLIDA in ihrer Strategie vier Schlüsselbereiche definiert: Digitalisierung und Onlinezugang/lebenslanges Lernen und Bildung/Kultur und Informationsgesellschaft/Fachausbildung. In diesen Bereichen ist eine Zusammenarbeit unter sämtlichen europäischen Bibliotheken gefragt, anders lassen sich die mannigfaltigen Probleme, die sich ergeben, nicht lösen.

EBLIDA sucht die Zusammenarbeit mit weiteren europäischen und internationalen Bibliotheksverbänden wie IFLA, LIBER, EUCLID und NAPLE. Die Zusammenarbeit soll in den kommenden Jahren noch verstärkt werden. Fernziel ist und bleibt eine klare Positionierung und starke Rolle von Bibliotheks-, Archiv- und Dokumentationsverbänden in unserer Wissensgesellschaft.