



Note from President

Dear Colleagues

It is a great honour and pleasure to accept the EBLIDA presidency for the next two years and I hope that in that time we can strengthen the position of EBLIDA as the common voice of the European library sector and its users. Libraries, archives and other information providers have a central part to play in the knowledge society and in creating sustained economic growth within the European community. However, we face considerable challenges in providing relevant digital content for research, educational and cultural purposes. With the European Commission's focus on digitization, online access and preservation, made most visible through the European Digital Library project, there is the opportunity for our library associations and organizations to make national, regional and local government aware of the need for establishing national strategies for long-term preservation and access to digital material.

The digital age brings with it a range of challenges, not least in the area of copyright, where EBLIDA will continue to lobby for optimal solutions for libraries.

I look forward to working with the EBLIDA members over the next two years, to continue to develop the EBLIDA network and help place libraries and archives on the European agenda.

Gerald Leitner, EBLIDA President



Gerald Leitner (Austria), EBLIDA President 2007-2009

EBLIDA Council meeting, Reykjavík, Iceland, 11-12 May 2007

By Carmen Morlon, EBLIDA EU Information Officer

EBLIDA celebrated its fifteenth annual Council meeting in Reykjavík, Iceland on 11 and 12 May 2007.

The meeting brought together around forty professionals from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and the UK, all of whom are EBLIDA Full and Associate members. In addition there were a number of external experts and invited guests, with expertise relevant to particular aspects of libraries, museums and archives, such as Susana Alegre Landáburu, representative of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and of the NAPLE Forum, Raf Dekeyser, Development Director of the Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche (LIBER), Teresa Hackett, eIFL-IP Manager and Andris Vilks, Board Member of the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries (LATABA) and of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL).

A full list of participants can be found at our website.

Day 1: Official opening session

The meeting on Friday was held at the National and University Library of Iceland.

The official opening session was addressed by President Jan Ewout van der Putten, together with the President of Upplýsing, Þórdís T Þórarinsdóttir, and key note speaker Mr Pétur Gunnarsson, writer and president of the Writers' Union of Iceland.



Pétur Gunnarsson (Iceland) "How to reach a saturated reader"

Mr van der Putten and Ms Þórarinsdóttir welcomed the participants on behalf of EBLIDA and the Icelandic association and institutions.

Icelandic libraries in the electronic age

Keynote by Dr Sigrún Klara Hannesdóttir, National Librarian

Dr Sigrún Klara Hannesdóttir highlighted that the National Library of Iceland, founded in 1918, was the main research library in the country since it also assumed in 1940 the role of the University Library of Iceland.

She emphasized as main points of interest the electronic national library, the electronic research library and the new information policy.

As regards the electronic national library, she explained that the digitisation policy aimed at distribution information on Icelandic cultural heritage, preserving for the future and providing services to users. She listed the material the library currently holds in digital form and accessible online: all Icelandic maps published before 1900, old manuscripts from the Icelandic Sagas and related literature e.g. books and journals and all Icelandic newspapers and journals published from the beginning to ca. 1920.

She stressed that although the complete Icelandic web has been systematically harvested three times a year since 2005, individual books and manuscripts are preserved but not accessible. Following discussions with the Union of Icelandic Publishers, the library will in the future preserve their material e.g. newspapers and books in PDF format, however it needs to create the requested facilities for reception.

For digitization, the Icelandic Parliament has granted the library with a three-year grant. The library also aims at further developing electronic services by initiating a contract with the Ministry of Education. Moreover, a contract with the 365-newspaper publishers has been agreed upon to digitise their newspapers (partly financed for the next three years by the publishers).

Ms Hannesdóttir went on to explain the means of the electronic research Library. She stated that national licences to electronic journals and databases have been arranged between the National Library and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science – the library pays for the licence and then collects funds from most libraries.

She concluded with the new 'Information for all' policy, part of the Icelandic library in the Knowledge society 2007-2011 strategy and published in May this year by Upplysing and highlighted its main key issues, which are: access to information and knowledge, proper qualifications and training for library staff as well as an unified library system and close cooperation among libraries.

eIFL.net: supporting libraries in developing and transition countries

Presentation by Teresa Hackett, Project Manager, eIFL-IP: Advocacy for Access to Knowledge

Ms Hackett provided the participants with the background to the guiding principles of eIFL.net, a non-profit organisation that supports and advocates for the wide availability of electronic resources by library users in transitional and developing countries, explaining in particular the goals of eIFL-Intellectual Property, which are to protect and promote the interests of libraries in copyright issues in eIFL member countries.

She stated the core activities of eIFL (content negotiation and licensing, consortium management, institutional repositories, free and open source software for libraries, the importance of overcoming the barriers (funds, poor resources, ownership, control and sustainability, connectivity, library systems and software and training) and the relevance of further cooperation between EBLIDA and eIFL identified for IP e.g. sharing expertise and resources e.g. contacts, network of copyright specialists, partnering in EU project proposals, providing support in common related areas at WIPO, IFLA and other international associations.

Why a joint effort? She explained that EBLIDA and eIFL-IP share the need to protect and promote the interests of libraries as well as the vision that libraries have a strong voice for fair and balanced copyright laws.

Full presentations of speakers can be downloaded from our website.

AGENDA Council Meeting

J Ewout van der Putten opened the meeting, presented the Council with apologies of those members who could not attend and gave approval to the agenda before giving the floor to Andrew Cranfield, who provided the participants with the background to the meeting explaining the activities carried out during 2006 as detailed in the annual report. The relevance of the European Digital Library initiative, which will sometime this year bring into life the EDL-net, of which EBLIDA is a member; the outcome of the IViR and Gowers reports, which makes it clear that EBLIDA needs to continue arguing the detrimental effects of the present European copyright legislation and lobby against any further extensions, the conclusions of the EBLIDA delegation which met with IViR representatives to discuss the position of libraries in relation to the database directive (a short position paper on this is foreseen during 2007); the strong support given to provisions for open access and digital repositories in the context of publicly-funded research, which will give more impetus to the work with LIBER and other relevant bodies in favour of access to research information; the progress made at Working Group level and the establishment of good working relationships with IFLA, LIBER, EUCLID and NAPLE.

Brief annual reports on lobby and monitoring issues by the Chairs of EBLIDA Working Groups: Toby Bainton

(Copyright Expert Group), Helena Patricio (Professional Education Group) and Kjell Nilsson (Trade and Libraries Group) followed. Of special interest is the EBLIDA-EUCLID Joint Conference entitled 'Librarian@2010 – Educating for the future', which will take place in Lisbon, Portugal from 19 to 21 September 2007 under the auspices of BAD.

Following the reports by the Working Groups, the Council discussed and agreed, with some changes, to the EBLIDA Strategy Review. The EBLIDA annual work programme for 2007, the financial statements for 2006, 2007 and 2008, the draft minutes of Council meeting last year in Budapest as well as the minutes of Executive Committee meetings in Budapest (Hungary, 4 May 2006), Krakow (Poland, 6-7 October 2006) and Coimbra (Portugal, 9-10 March 2007) were all approved without discussion.

The meeting closed at 17h00.

The remaining item of agenda (EBLIDA Elections 2007-2009) was held on Saturday at the Nordic House (see press releases online for further information).

Day 2: The European Digital Library

By Andrew Cranfield, EBLIDA Director

Following the election of the new EBLIDA president and Executive Committee the last session of the Council meeting focused on the European Digital Library (EDL). EBLIDA's director gave a short introduction as to the aims and goals of the EDL and the European Commission recommendation on "digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation". The EDL is to bring European cultural heritage, in its broadest sense, to users from a multilingual common access point, providing access to books, journals, newspapers, photographs, museum objects, archival documents and audiovisual material. It has often been remarked that the EDL is the European answer to Google, but as the recommendation encourages partnerships between the cultural sector and private institutions this is probably more a myth than anything else.

EBLIDA has been represented on the High Level Expert Group on the EDL, subgroup on copyright which has worked together with rights holders, collecting societies and other relevant parties to find solutions for orphan works, out-of-print works and digitisation for preservation. EBLIDA has also joined the EDL-net which aims to bring together a large number of European stakeholders to discuss how best to bring about the vision of the EDL digital library. The director also pointed out that of course the EDL is just part of a much larger discussion on how to digitise and create access to a wealth of material in libraries, archives and other cultural institutions across Europe. To strengthen EBLIDA in this area the Executive Committee has approved a proposal to establish an expert group on digitisation and online access to ensure that EBLIDA can lobby and promote initiatives to create dynamic and relevant e-content.

The next speaker was Kjell Nilsson, of the National Library of Sweden, who addressed the EDL from the per-

spective of a national library. He started by briefly outlining the strategies adopted in building a digital library in Sweden. The National Library has been harvesting the web for almost ten years and there are close to 300 million web pages in the collection of the library which can be accessed by users on-site. However Kjell Nilsson was less enthusiastic about the library's digitisation activities which he described as scattered, though the library had received funding for human resources in 2006 for digitisation activities. The problem of providing users with in-copyright digital material (outside of the so called "big deals") had not been resolved and the library had had great difficulty finding contracting partners among the right holders. A problem at the moment was also the legal deposit of digital material, where new legislation is expected in 2008 or 2009.

Mr. Nilsson then went on to discuss the EDL underlining the positive aspects – underlining the importance of preserving the European cultural heritage, promoting cross boarder knowledge development, best practice and networking and supporting the idea of centres of excellence to support digitisation initiatives. However, there are a number of problems. Firstly there is no European financial support for the actual digitisation, restrictive EC copyright legislation greatly limits the number of publications which can be made available to the public, integrating museums and archives into the EDL, issues of multilinguality and an overlap with other projects, e.g. the Michael project.

Kjell Nilsson thought there was very little possibility of obtaining direct EU funding for actual digitisation activities, just as it is unlikely that we will see major changes here and now, in international copyright which is formed by a larger global IPR regime defined to a large extent by WIPO and international trade agreements. In a sense the solution to lack of access to in-copyright material is by negotiated licenses, which is not necessarily a bad thing if the actual commercial value of the publication is reflected in the price of the license, but unfortunately this is not often the case and we see too many examples of gross over pricing by content providers.

In summing up Mr. Nilsson was positive about the EDL initiative, though he remarked that maybe a European perspective vis-à-vis a more global perspective was slightly limiting – knowledge knows no borders. We should abandon all talk of "challenging Google" and seek sound partnerships with those organisations that have the economic weight and expertise to support libraries and other cultural organisations in their endeavours to provide content and access.

The final presentation was by Andris Vilks, director of the National Library of Latvia, who gave a presentation on behalf of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), indicating their involvement with the EDL through their "ownership" of TEL (The European Library) and national policies of digitisation. Mr. Vilks concluded his talk by suggesting various ways in which CENL and EBLIDA can work together in the future.