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LIBER Division of Access

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General aim, membership and Divisional Committee

The main aim of the Access Division of Access is to develop and improve access to European collections in libraries, both by making the collections better known and by promoting the application of new technology to improve remote access to materials and acknowledgement of collections through network access. The division is opened to all libraries that need or want to reach it according to its main frame of aims.

At the present, the Division of Access of LIBER is constituted by a total number of 65 libraries from different types and countries, according to the registrations confirmed since July 1994 until the end of February 1995. Most are academic and university libraries and library institutions and organizations. Countries represented are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovenska Republic, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The scope of membership and countries is reflecting the wide scope of LIBER membership at the present.

According to the LIBER Statutes (18.4.), the Division of Access is administered by a committee formed by the Divisional Chairman, the Divisional Secretary and three ordinary members. The Chairman of the four divisions of LIBER (Collection Development, Preservation, Access and Library Management and Administration) of LIBER were elected during the past General Assembly in Göttingen (July 1994). Since November of 1994, the Divisional Committee is formed on the basis of provisional nominations conformed by the LIBER President provisionally, to be conformed by the members of the Division at the first meeting of the Access Division settled on Tuesday, 4th July of 1995 in Leuven, during the celebration of the annual conference of LIBER (3-8 July 1995, Leuven). Divisional Committee of Access is composed, at the present, by Vinyet Panyella (Biblioteca de Catalunya, Catalonia/Spain) as Chairman, Birgitte Lau (University Library of Roskilde, Denmark) as Secretary and Peter Bockhorst (Universitätsbibliothek Münster,

Germany), Christine Deschamps (Bibliothèque Universitaire de l'Université Paris-V René Descartes, France) and Suzanne Berke (National Szecheny Library, Hungary). The Divisional Committee formally met in 17th January 1995 for producing an outline programme, according to the need of establishing the programme of work of the Division as it was agreed in the Executive Board meeting of 17th December in Copenhagen. The Divisional Committee dealt about the Access Division itself concerning the scope and concrete aims, access division issues, liaison with other groups, the Library Programme of the European Union; drafted an initial plan of activities and also the agenda for the first Access Division Annual Meeting.

Divisional definitions

Scope

Three areas of work are identified relating to the broad concept of Access within the European research library framework:

- a) Availability of collection data in computerized form
- b) Standards
- c) User services

Aims

On the most general level, the aim of the division's work must be to address the various restrictions to access, found at various levels, hindering free availability of all informations to all users. Restrictions are such:

- geographical and political barriers
- underdeveloped technology
- funding problems
- preservation problems
- censorship
- legal/copyright

The Divisional committee found it necessary to start its work by collecting information from all members as to the state of art at their libraries with respect to access. The scope is so broad that a focus must be chosen on the basis of the most urgent access problems and interests of members of libraries. On the basis

of the incoming answers from the member libraries the Committee will outline what should be taken up as the Division's main issues at the present.

Issues

Some issues from the broad scope of access were remarked:

- a) Technological issues: expansion connections to all European countries and the "superhighways of information"; retroconversion of catalogues; electronic full-text access, etc.
- b) Standard issues: transparency of character sets; network standards; various format standards (MARC, authority files, etc.;
- c) Funding issues: ways to support the transition to computerized access for libraries with great of funding problems, etc.

The Divisional Committee considered various strategies with respect to types of activities to organize, keeping the proportional emphasis on research on specific projects and on meetings or seminars.

Liaison with other professional groups

The Divisional Committee surveyed various possibilities of liaisons with other professional groups concerned in access issues, among them:

- IFLA ILL Standing Committee;
- IFLA Information Technology Standing Committee;
- ISO
- EBLIDA
- ARL
- OCLC
- EU-DG XIII Library Programme
- ALA / LITA

The Divisional Committee will also seek information and contact to various digitalization projects and collaboration with other LIBER Divisions also will be sought on the basis of joint projects. The Committee agreed that the Access Division of LIBER should play a role in establishing a feed back to the administration of the Library Programme of EU-DG XIII in the form of

evaluative comments of impact of the Library Programme and the functionality of national focal points.

Initial planning of Divisional Activities and Draft of the Agenda for the first Access Division Annual Meeting

Enquiry to Divisional members

The Divisional Committee agreed a next planning of an enquiry to be sent out to all LIBER members focused on:

- a) Feedback from members as to wishes for priorities with respect to preferred project, working methods, etc.;
- b) Libraries should indicate their state of art with respect to computerized or remote access to their collections, access policies and immediate plans for changes.

To ensure as complete information as possible, one person from each member country will be contacted to answer questions of access in within the national framework. Conclusions of the enquiry will then be presented at the annual Division Meeting in Leuven.

Draft of the Agenda for the first Access Division Annual Meeting

The Divisional Committee drafted the agenda for the first Access Division Annual, to be officially announced through the programme of the LIBER annual Conference.

The Access Divisional Annual Meeting will take place on the 4th July 1995 at Leuven, from 9 a.m. to 13 p.m., divided in two main parts:

9.00-11.00:

- General Assembly of the Division;
- Presentation of the Divisional Committee;
- Presentation, discussion and adoption of the programme of activities of the Division of Access;
- Proposals for action.

11.15-13.00:

Professional Input: Integrative pannel discussion on the theme "What are the principal restrictions to access". Input from 3-4 pannel participants, each 15 minutes. Some ideas were elicited as:

- penetration of major library programme projects in Europe;
- restrictions to access due to local conditions (policies, buildings, funding ...);
- access to information vs. access to the physical library;
- "effective success": actually getting your hands on the information.