



Education and Culture DG



CENTRAL LIBRARY

CENTRAL LIBRARY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ACTIVITY REPORT

2008

1958 – 2008: A look back at 50 years of the Central Library



Foreword

1958 – 2008: A look back at 50 years of the Central Library

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Foreword

2008 was an exceptional year that saw the 50th anniversary of the creation of the European Commission's Central Library. The Library has developed during this half-century in tandem with the Union by making the wealth of bibliographical information it has stored in its memory available to the Commission's staff and to citizens.

This information takes the form not only of legal texts, works produced by the institutions, official documents and Community publications, but also of academic texts and commentaries by experts in the various fields covered by European integration issued via articles or monographic publications.

In 50 years, the Library's primary goal has remained unchanged: to be at the service of the Commission's staff in order to help them to obtain information on a given subject as effectively as possible.

The Library has gradually opened up to citizens. Providing access to Community information is one of the ways in which a European 'consciousness', without which the European project would be built on shaky foundations, can gradually be developed. Teachers, researchers, students, lawyers and economists thus have access to the Library's collections.

The Library is becoming more and more open, and its means of providing information have expanded beyond all recognition. Developments in office and communication IT have broadened the horizons of the reading rooms. Nowadays, collections can be consulted online, loans and copies can be requested remotely and articles are increasingly available to anyone with a personal computer.

For all of these reasons, the Library's 50th anniversary was celebrated in 2008 by focusing primarily on two aspects that characterise the development of modern libraries: firstly, the use of cutting-edge technology to reach out to potential readers, and, secondly, the contribution made by libraries to knowledge and innovation. With this in mind, the Library went out to meet the Commission's staff, by setting up a temporary stand in the Berlaymont building. It also organised two seminars in Brussels and Luxembourg on the theme of the contribution made by libraries to innovation and a conference devoted to the presentation of a publication.

Now, 50 years after it was created, the European Commission's Central Library needs to continue to work closely with those involved in driving forward today's world of information.

In 2009, we shall be considering how the Library can best adapt to its users and in particular to those readers whose approach to obtaining information has undergone a major change due to the current proliferation of Internet-related tools.

Let us wish the Central Library good luck for the year ahead.

Odile Quintin
Director-General



1958 – 2008: A look back at 50 years of the Central Library

1. The creation of the Library

In 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created.

On 23 March 1957 the Treaties of Rome were signed, establishing EURATOM and the European Economic Community (EEC).

The Library's collections were born in 1958, on the eve of the launch of European integration.

Initially spread across the ECSC, the EEC and EURATOM, the collections were brought together in the Commission's Central Library in 1968 when these three structures were merged. The Commission's Directorates-General also had specialist libraries of their own.

Today the Library occupies two sites - one in Brussels, which hosts the central services, and the other in Luxembourg. Its general collections and the specialised collections of the Commission's Directorates-General are now together in a single catalogue.

2. Who uses the Library?

Initially set up as an administrative purchasing service, the Central Library has, over the years, taken on the role of the 'Commission's memory'. It meets requests for documents from officials of the Commission and the other institutions who are involved in developing the European project.

In 1973, it opened up to a wider specialist readership, which included the business community, teachers, postgraduate students and lawyers - people with an interest in learning about the impact of the process of Community integration.

Today, in keeping with this trend towards greater openness, the Library makes its collections accessible to the staff and trainees of the European Commission and of the European Union's other institutions or bodies, and to external visitors, i.e. experts and researchers, such as professionals, diplomats, civil servants from the Member States, teachers and students wishing to make use of the Library's collections on European integration.

3. The collections

The Library's collections have grown in proportion with the increase in the number of policies that fall within the Community's powers. Whereas the Library's collections initially covered subjects that were almost exclusively economic and legal in nature, they now encompass fields such as science and technology, current affairs, education and culture.

The Library now collects publications in all fields covered by European integration, namely international relations, economic and social policy, law and administration, politics, culture, society, education, training, agriculture, industry, trade, transport, public finances, banking, international monetary relations, labour, management, demography, biology, health, the environment, science and research, and information and communication.

Between 1958 and the 1990s the only medium for the Library's collections was paper. This was



gradually replaced by microfiches, CD-ROMs and videos, and, more recently, Internet links to the full texts of documents or articles from periodicals.

4. Cataloguing, indexing and access to the collections

Over the years, with a carefully selected range of new titles in different Community languages, the Library has been able to enrich and, gradually, to fine-tune the Library's collections in all aspects of Community policies. These titles can be found in the catalogue thanks to the painstaking cataloguing and indexing work done by the librarians of the Central Library and of the Directorates-General. The Library's cataloguing follows the Anglo-American rules in the MARC21 format. Indexing is done on the basis of the ECLAS thesaurus, developed from the macro-thesaurus of the OECD and enhanced with descriptors from the thesaurus of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) or Eurovoc. Since it came into being, the ECLAS thesaurus has also incorporated new descriptors created when new concepts come to light.

When the Library started up, the alphabetical, geographical and Community catalogues only allowed for manual searches, firstly on paper, then on microfiche.

Information was passed on to readers via bibliographies and publications informing them about any new developments in the Library's collections, in particular the BIBLIO series, which was regularly sent to officials interested in a particular subject. Officials could borrow publications or request copies of articles at their leisure.

In 1978, the Library's catalogue was gradually automated for all new acquisitions: the ECLAS (European Commission's Library Automation System) catalogue was born. At that time, the ECLAS catalogue was almost exclusively for the use of officials of the institutions and only referred to publications published in paper format. Until the beginning of the 1990s, the Library had very little information technology. Terminals on which to search titles were rare, the ECLAS search language was complex and required considerable training, and manual operations such as acquisitions, cataloguing, indexing and checking-in were very time-consuming.

It was at that time that the Library acquired library management software called MultiLIS. This enabled the Library to feed ECLAS (cataloguing and indexing) more regularly and in particular to automate the handling of acquisitions, the budget and loans.

In 1995, EUROPA, the European Union's official website was launched. The Library's catalogue appeared on the site – the first time it was genuinely opened up to a wider readership. The formats for accessing collections were gradually extended to include CD-ROMs and the online electronic consultation of original texts and, subsequently, scientific journals.

Lastly, in 2006, the Library overhauled its management system in order to adapt its services fully to web technology. It is now in a position to offer readers a broad range of electronic services and to adapt to future technological developments. The software chosen was ALEPH500 by Ex-Libris.



5. What does the Central Library offer nowadays?

The Central Library's catalogue now contains, for all locations together, over 500 000 titles in all Community languages, relating to the different aspects of the development of Community integration. In total, 2 000 subscriptions to periodicals are taken out every year of which 600 are accessible online.

All of the collections are housed in the reading rooms, where readers have direct access to reference works, and in the storage areas where collections can be accessed on prior request.

The number of titles increases by some 7 000 new acquisitions per year.

European Commission staff can consult the ECLAS catalogue via the internal computer network, which provides online access to requests for loans and copies. The Commission's external readers can consult the catalogue via the EUROPA website. They can access the collections in the Library itself or by means of an inter-library loan. External readers are not allowed to borrow books directly.

The ECLAS catalogue is consulted over 2000 times a day by internal and external readers.

http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/index_en.htm



1. Highlights of 2008

1.1. Management

The Library launched various calls for tenders relating to bookbinding work for the Brussels site, newspaper subscriptions for the Luxembourg site and the acquisition of monographic publications.

Following the call for tenders relating to acquisitions, which comprised five lots divided according to the publications' country of origin, a framework contract on works published in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus was signed on 5 June. Two other framework contracts were signed on 4 July, covering works published in the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, and all countries outside the European Union except Switzerland, and works published by international organisations, irrespective of their place of publication, except the Council of Europe and the OECD.

For the remaining lots which, in the absence of a suitable bid, could not be awarded, a call for tender by negotiated procedure was launched, the results of which will be known in 2009. The main projected benefits of introducing these new contracts are better control of costs and fewer invoices to deal with.

In terms of internal financial management, a large number of IT tasks were carried out in order to make the management of Library acquisitions by ALEPH500 compatible with the Commission's financial and accounting rules.

At the start of the year, the Library carried out two reader satisfaction surveys. One of these was aimed at assessing the services it offered on the Internet and the other related to its reading-room services. The findings of the two surveys were broadly positive, but the Library also took on board many practical lessons.

The Library also focused on preparing specifications, which, in 2009, will enable an external contractor to carry out a strategic assessment of the Library's services. The assessment is expected to start in April and to continue until the end of 2009.

1.2. Communication

To mark its 50th anniversary, the Central Library successfully organised other promotional and awareness-raising activities.

- Promotional material was produced in the form of: posters, pamphlets, bookmarks, notepads and place-mats bearing the Library's logo, and was distributed around the Commission's buildings and departments.



- Phil Wood, one of the authors of "*The Intercultural City: planning for diversity advantage*", gave a presentation on this work at a meeting that took place on 21 October as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The meeting was attended by over 70 people.
- The Library – with part of its collections and some of its staff - moved into the entrance hall of the Berlaymont building between 24 and 28 November, receiving more than 100 visitors a day.
- Two conferences were held on the theme of 'Libraries and innovation', one in Luxembourg on 1 December, which was attended by around 80 people, and the other in Brussels on 2 December, which was attended by over 140 people. These two events took place in association with the INFISO and EAC Directorates-General, OPOCE, the Belgian Royal Library, the Luxembourg National Library, the Virtual Resource Centre for Knowledge about Europe, LIBER, EBLIDA, the European Digital Library Foundation, the United Nations Library and UNESCO.



2. Main achievements of the European Commission Central Library in 2008

2.1. Library activities

2.1.1 Acquisitions and subscriptions

	Acquisitions	Newspapers	Periodicals
Brussels	5 467	1 757 subscriptions, including 85 online*	1 919 subscriptions, including 606 online*
		218 titles	1 519 titles
Luxembourg	364	65 subscriptions*	131 subscriptions*
		37 titles	130 titles

*The term "subscriptions" here means "number of copies".

The Central Library in Brussels also receives donations of publications, particularly from national organisations, universities or institutes.

In 2008, around 1 800 periodicals were available online to European Commission staff in full-text format. Half of these were commercial subscription titles, while the other half were international and EU publications.

52 133 articles were downloaded from the for-payment subscriptions in 2008. This figure was 56% up on 2007.

The newspapers are for use by all Commission departments.

With regard to the periodicals held in Luxembourg, the Library receives more than 2 000 titles free of charge, mostly obtained in exchange for Community publications (particularly EUROSTAT publications).

For the supply of newspapers in 2008, new framework contracts were implemented at the end of 2007.

Following an open invitation to tender, three framework contracts covering the acquisition of monographs entered into force in 2008. Two other lots that could not be awarded are currently undergoing a negotiated tender procedure.

A comparison of the figures for the past three years, with a largely similar budget, shows little change in the volume of acquisitions and subscriptions for Brussels and Luxembourg taken together.



2.1.2 Cataloguing

Statistics as at 31 December 2008	
Number of new notices created in 2008	20 170*
Total number of notices	418 238

*30% up on 2007.

2.1.3. Loans

In 2008, the Central Library and all the libraries and documentation centres of the Commission's DGs made 32 102 loans and 7 762 loan renewals, while 26 555 borrowed works were returned. During the same year, these libraries received 9 872 requests to reserve publications made online and 6 062 requests for copies, also made online.

The Central Library in Brussels (CLB) made 6 465 loans and 1 899 loan renewals, whilst 6 133 borrowed works were returned. It received 4 295 requests for reservations and 4 683 requests for copies.

The Central Library in Luxembourg (CLL) made 1 272 loans and 197 loan renewals, whilst 1 021 borrowed works were returned. It received 575 requests for reservations and 61 requests for copies.

Statistics as at 31 December 2008	
Total number of requests for reservations made online	9 872
- CLB	4 295
- CLL	575
Total number of loans	32 102
- CLB	6 465
- CLL	1 272
Total number of loan renewals	7 762
- CLB	1 899
- CLL	197
Total number of returns	26 555
- CLB	6 133
- CLL	1 021
Total number of requests for copies made online	6 062
- CLB	4 683
- CLL	61

The total number of loans made by the Central Library and all the libraries and documentation centres of the Commission's Directorates-General is steadily rising.



The effectiveness of the ALEPH500 management system, which makes it possible to manage and follow up the return of borrowed works is illustrated by the number of works returned to the Library and to its network in 2008 (26 555), 35% up on 2007 (19 700).

2.1.4. Consultation of the ECLAS catalogue

Average number of consultations per day in 2008	2 050
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2.1.5. RéseauBIB

The General Assembly of the network of libraries and documentation centres of the Commission Directorates-General and departments was held on 2 October 2008.

During the General Assembly, the Central Library gave a presentation on the programme of activities planned to celebrate its 50th anniversary and on its plan to have an external assessment of its services carried out in order to set the strategic priorities for its future development. It also informed the members of the network about the new procedures for acquiring monographs that came into force in 2008 via three framework contracts.

2.1.6. Training

In 2008, the Central Library continued its training programme on the use of the various ALEPH500 management software modules.

TITLE	COURSE		PARTICIPANTS	
	BXL	LUX	BXL	LUX
Searching and how to use OPAC	7	2	40	6
Loans/transfers/circulation	5	-	27	-
Cataloguing	10	4	55	16
Indexing	3	-	15	-
Cataloguing of articles	2	-	9	-
Acquisitions	2	-	6	-
TOTAL	35		174	

For five years, the number of courses and participants has remained largely unchanged.



2.1.7. Eurolib

The institutional and associated member libraries of EUROLIB met twice in 2008.

One such meeting took place at EUROCONTROL in Brussels on 16 and 17 June. The first day's proceedings concerned the EU Bookshop project, document management and archiving at the Council of Europe and at Eurocontrol. The second day was given over to a conference on the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), a mechanism for identifying digital resources.

On 6 and 7 October, the members of EUROLIB met at the CEDEFOP premises in Thessaloniki. The main subjects discussed were: copyright and the use of public sector information; principles and procedures applicable to calls for tenders; performance indicators in library management; cataloguing at source of Community publications.

2.1.8. External relations

In 2008, the Central Library took part in the following international meetings:

- "Salon i-Expo 2008" digital information fair (Paris Expo, Paris, France, 28-29 May)
- 14th International Conference "Library: the Key to Users' Success" (Institute of Information and Library Science, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 2-3 June)
- 3rd IGeLU Conference (International Group of Ex Libris Users) (Spanish National Library, Madrid, Spain, 7-10 September)
- Book Fair (Frankfurt, Germany, 15-17 October)
- Online Information 2008 (Olympia Grand Hall, London, UK, 3-4 December).



2.2. Services to readers

2.2.1. Services in the reading rooms: Brussels

Reading rooms – 2008	
Visitors received (internal and external readers combined)	4 010
Access authorisations granted to external readers (one-day access + access cards valid for up to one year)	1 813
Bibliographical information	4 260
Telephone enquiries	1 873
Fax enquiries	428
E-mail enquiries	5 168
Works taken out of storage	29 409
Number of pages photocopied	380 977
Number of pages scanned	81 092

The number of internal readers is steadily declining, as most of the Library's services (loans, photocopies, consultation of periodicals, etc.) are now available online to Commission staff. The same applies to e-mail communications, the number of which was down compared to 2007, as readers are tending to make their requests via the online catalogue.

It is estimated that the average number of people visiting the Library each day is 20 (internal and external readers combined).

On the other hand, factors that clearly led to the increase, in relation to the 2007 figures, in the number of pages photocopied and scanned include the fact that many more services are available online, officials' access to an increasing number of online periodicals and the regular publication of BIBLIOS in electronic form.

2.2.2. External readers

Breakdown of access cards (valid for up to one year) by category of reader and group visits to the Central Library in Brussels in 2008	
Total number of access cards	448
- students	335
- various professions	113
Group visits	27

Group visits accounted for 792 visitors to the Library in 2008, 27% up on the 2007 figure.



2.2.3. Services in the reading rooms: Luxembourg

Activities of the Central Library in Luxembourg in 2008	
Readers	2 742
External readers	1 079
Group visits	1
Bibliographical searches	1 240
Number of pages photocopied	41 465
Number of pages scanned	3 028

It is estimated that the actual number of people visiting the Library each day is, on average, 13 (internal and external readers combined).

2.2.4. Inter-library loans (ILLs)

The requests for publications made by all the staff of the Commission Directorates-General and departments in Brussels gave rise to 1 183 loan requests by the Central Library to outside libraries (outgoing ILLs). 950 of these 1 183 requests could be met. The Competition DG and the Legal Service, operating their own inter-library loans service, made a total of 91 and 109 loan requests respectively to outside libraries.

Outgoing inter-library loan requests made by the CLB in 2008	
Total	1 183
Met	950

Outgoing inter-library loan requests made by DG COMP in 2008	
Total	91
Met	87

Outgoing inter-library loan requests made by the Legal Service in 2008	
Total	109
Met	105

The Central Library in Brussels received 109 requests for loans and/or copies from other libraries (incoming ILLs).

Incoming inter-library loan requests to the CLB in 2008	
Total	51
Incoming inter-library copy requests to the CLB in 2008	
Total	58



The Central Library in Luxembourg does not use the inter-library loan system very much itself, but it does receive regular requests from the other Réseau BIB member libraries.

Inter-library loans at the CLL in 2008	
International inter-library loans	7

2.2.5. Publications

The Central Library in Brussels publishes two series of quarterly bibliographies: the **EUR series**, which focuses on articles relating to the EU and its policies, and the **INT series**, which selects articles on international politics and economics affecting the EU. The BIBLIO series are published exclusively in electronic form. In 2008, there were four publications for each EUR and INT series.

2.3. Information technology

Information technology was dominated by two ongoing issues: the replacement of the stock of computers, in particular in the reading rooms, and the development of a bridge between the ALEPH500 management system and the Commission's accounting system. A great deal of IT work was undertaken in 2008 to make the management of the Library's acquisitions using ALEPH500 compatible with the European Commission's financial and accounting rules.

The Library also introduced development or purchase requests concerning, on the one hand, Standard Z39.50 which is expected to facilitate access to its catalogue and the downloading of external bibliographical notices, and on the other hand, ALEPH500's ARC reporting tool.

3. Projects for 2009

As regards the visibility of its services, the Library will continue to be proactive towards its main readership, i.e. Commission officials. This will take the form of a mobile information stand, which will reach out to them by going to their places of work, and of book presentations to be organised by the Library, thus raising its visibility among potential readers.

The Library will also set a long-term development strategy, taking account of, on the one hand, the current explosion in the volume of published documents and, on the other, the needs of a new generation of users who are increasingly conversant with the Internet. To this end, it will pilot an external assessment of its services in 2009.

Along with these two main actions, the Library's website will gradually be redesigned, for the benefit of internal and external readers.



Annexes:

1. Mission statement of the Central Library

Through the Commission Central Library and networking with other partner libraries, to offer researchers quality library services based on extensive collections and electronic management of those collections within its ECLAS catalogue:

- by making available to the Commission, its staff and others seeking information in the field of Community integration any useful information published in either paper or electronic format;
- by responding effectively to requests for documents and offering interactive electronic library services allowing users to have access to information and/or to identify information sources without having to call upon external assistance and without prior training;
- by developing cooperation and partnership between libraries both inside and outside the Commission, and in particular with the libraries of the other institutions.

2. Managerial staff of the Central Library

Roberta PERSICHELLI-SCOLA	Head of Unit
Roland LAURENT	Deputy Head of Unit
Horst WOHLFEIL	Head of the Luxembourg Central Library

3. Human resources, premises and collections of the Central Library

1. Human resources of the Central Library (as at 31 December 2008)

Brussels:

- AD: 3
- AST (ex B): 14 (+ 1 AT2b) + (1 AC-GF3 vacant)
- AST (ex C): 25 (+ 1 AT2b) + (1 AC-GF2)
- AST (ex D): 1 (+ 6 AC-GF1) + (1 AC-GF1 vacant)



Luxembourg :

- AST (ex B) : 2
- AST (ex C) : 7
- AST (ex D) : 2

2. Premises/collections of the Central Library

Brussels:

- 1 reading room on 2 levels (63 seats) offering free access to more than 19 000 volumes (reference works, periodicals, newspapers, CD-ROMs). Databases can also be consulted here;
- some 534 250 volumes, split between 1 underground storage area (1 200 m² for around 334 050 volumes) and an offsite store (Kortenbergh: around 970 m² for some 200 200 volumes).

The offsite store contains works which users of the Library regularly ask to consult or borrow (85 volumes per month on average).

Luxembourg:

- 1 reading room (28 places) containing 2 500 reference works;
- 1 catalogue room permitting consultation of databases;
- 4 storage areas (860 m²) containing some 103 500 volumes.

3. Internet sites

ECLAS catalogue: <http://ec.europa.eu/eclas/>

Central Library : http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/index_en.htm



4. Central Library budget resources 2001-2009¹

		2001	2002	2003	2004 ²	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
A-2250	Purchase of books	710	710	730						
A-2254	Binding									
A-2255	Subscriptions to and purchases of data	1 410	1 410	1 450						
15 01 60 01	Library stocks, subscriptions, purchase and preservation of books				2 400	2 400	2 650	2 750	2 700	2 700

¹ In EUR million

² From 2004, single heading 15 01 60 01: library stocks, subscriptions, purchase and preservation of books.