

## **ACTIVITY REPORT 1998**

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### **Foreword**

The Amsterdam Treaty regards keeping the general public informed as an important priority. The European agenda needs to be explained more clearly and citizens must have rapid, easy access to the resources which form the nucleus of information on developments in the integration process.

For several years the European Commission's Central Library has provided a vital source of information on Community policies for officials and university researchers alike.

By networking with the specialist libraries of the various Directorates-General, it has built up wide-ranging collections over the years which can be used to monitor current developments or explore Community history.

During 1998, the Library considerably strengthened its position in the world of information by

launching both the *Libraries* site and its ECLAS cataloguing database on the Internet via the EUROPA server. This initiative proves the Library's ability to adapt to the new requirements of researchers, whose profile has changed radically over the years. Researchers who at one time consulted the collections "in house" are now, increasingly, "remote" readers.

I have encouraged Unit X.A.6 to continue its efforts in this direction. It goes without saying that, as in the past, development should be based on the quality of all the collections housed and managed in Brussels and Luxembourg and that efficiency should be strengthened through networking the Library with other libraries and the European Documentation Centres.

The significance of concepts such as "information management" and "life-long learning" for the future contours of society should help to accentuate still further the value of the work done by documentalists, librarians and other information specialists. My hope is that this will be assisted by the distribution and publication of this report on Europa.

At a time when the Community institutions are furthering their dialogue with the public, I hope that during 1999 the European Commission's Central Library will become increasingly open to researchers. The transfer of the Luxembourg Library to the new Bech building and the search for a suitable building for the Library in Brussels are important factors in this respect and I shall be monitoring developments closely.

Spyros A. Pappas  
Director-General  
May 1999

## **1. Highlights**

The positive aspects of the 1998 activities of Unit X.A.6, which is responsible for European Libraries and Documentation Centres, arise in the main from the effort and progress made by means of information technology in terms of internet access and collection management. On 13 March 1998, ECLAS, the catalogue covering the Central Library and the libraries and information centres of the Directorates-General, was launched on the EUROPA internet server. In addition, on 20 July 1998, the "Libraries" site was in turn made available on the net. The Unit has also had a scanner since August and a new version (11.1c) of its MultiLIS management software since October.

With regard to the EDCs, a discussion paper on the future of the network was introduced. A procedure was established for progressive evaluation of the existing Centres. An initial coordination meeting of EDC national representatives was held in Brussels.

No solution was found during the year to the question of the Library's premises in Brussels. A draft communication to the Commission is in preparation. It will outline the Library's development prospects in the year 2000 and will raise the issues of its premises and its wider opening to the public.

The Central Library in Luxembourg is preparing for its move to the Bech building at Plateau du Kirchberg. Issues relating to furnishing, equipment and data media have been dealt with.

Compactus shelving is at present being installed in the storage areas.

## **2. An overview of the European Commission's Central Library in 1998**

### ***Library activities***

The Central Library in Brussels made 6 857 acquisitions in 1998, covering the purchase of monographs, CD-ROMs and standing orders, as well as the receipt of gifts or exchanges. This figure, lower than in previous years (9 035 acquisitions in 1996, 7 479 acquisitions in 1997) reflects the sparing use of funds imposed upon the Library as a result of its budgetary restrictions.

Also for budgetary reasons, 135 newspaper titles representing 1 017 subscriptions were ordered at the beginning of 1998 (compared with 140 titles representing 1 656 subscriptions in 1997) and 2 031 specialist periodical titles representing 3 444 subscriptions. The newspapers are for use by all the Commission departments in Brussels.

The Luxembourg library handled approximately 800 orders during the year and 950 subscriptions and standing orders.

In view of this situation, the Library is increasingly concentrating upon the rationalisation of financial management procedures. As a result, an invitation to tender for bookbinding services was launched in November 1998 and another invitation to tender, this time for newspaper subscriptions, will be launched during 1999.

The MultiLIS software, used for managing the collections, enabled 119 886 entries to be processed (all modules together) during 1998 for the entire RéseauBIB inter-library network.

This figure, which is abnormally high compared with that for 1997 (31 417), is explained by the major drives to monitor quality and to correct numerous catalogue entries, either in batches or individually, during the second half of the year.

The Central Library librarians alone created 20 520 new entries in 1998 (an increase of 25% over 1997), 14 579 of which were carried out by the Brussels and Luxembourg libraries and 5 941 by the libraries of other Directorates-General.

A breakdown of all the entries by language is presented in annex 5.

A new member joined RéseauBIB during 1998: Directorate-General XV. RéseauBIB currently links 25 libraries and/or DG documentation centres or Commission departments. The annual general meeting of RéseauBIB members was held on 27 November 1998 in Brussels. The meeting discussed the wider distribution of the catalogue since ECLAS became available on the Internet and the resulting implications for each member regarding up-dating. It stressed the need to continue and improve cooperation between the libraries.

In this context of interdepartmental cooperation, it should be noted that in 1998 the Central

Library organised 10 training sessions aimed at network members which were devoted to the use of MultiLIS software for cataloguing, indexing, loan management, purchases, periodicals, serial publications and local lists.

The annual general meeting of EUROLIB, the grouping of the libraries of the European and equivalent institutions, which celebrated the tenth anniversary of its establishment in 1998 and for which Unit X.A.6 provides the Presidency and Secretariat, was held on 26 and 27 March 1998 at the Council's premises in Brussels. The grouping held an interim working meeting on 29 and 30 October at the European University Institute in Florence. Significant progress was made in 1998 towards setting up an organisation more suited to the challenges of the future. Two working parties were formed, one to study specific functions for the EUROLIB internet site (electronic archiving) and the other to examine the question of storage.

The Central Library took part in various external events which included, in particular, the general meetings of DRA-MultiLIS users in Europe which were held on 11 February 1998 and 24-25 September 1998, the DRA users Annual Conference, held from 28 February to 4 March 1998 in Saint-Louis (USA), the EIA (European Information Association) Conference which took place in London on 17 and 18 March 1998, the Annual General Conference of LIBER in Paris from 30 June to 3 July 1998, the 64th General Conference of IFLA in Amsterdam from 10 to 14 August 1998 and the Editors' Forum held within the framework of the Frankfurt Book Fair from 8 to 13 October 1998.

Andrea SEVETSON, Web Master at Berkeley, University of California, visited Brussels from 28 May to 4 June 1998, for a working and cooperation session on the Unit's internet sites.

### *Services to readers*

Some of the information given in this section calls for preliminary comment.

Attendance at the Library in Brussels and Luxembourg fell in comparison with previous years. Two explanations can be given for this.

Firstly, officials are in general increasingly using the Commission's intranet to search the Library's catalogue and outside readers are using the EUROPA internet server. If necessary, both contact the Library by e-mail and so make increasingly rare visits to the Library's premises. Secondly, the Community and international publications room at the Library in Brussels has been closed since 1 January 1998, its collections having been transferred to the reading room. In addition, the Library in Brussels has been closed on Fridays since 1 June 1998. As far as the Luxembourg Library is concerned, many readers have been lost as a result of transferring the EUROSTAT departments to the new Bech building.

The inter-library lending figures in Brussels have risen since the launch of ECLAS on the internet. As far as external users are concerned, only inter-library lending is in fact authorised.

The main task of the European Commission's Central Library, in Brussels and Luxembourg, is to

provide library services to officials of the institutions. It is not open to the public and access is provided only to a limited number of outside readers who fulfil certain criteria.

In 1998, the readers card office of the Brussels Library issued 1 369 access authorisations to outside readers, 538 of which were for post-graduate level students from around seventy universities and *grandes écoles* in the European Union. 1 970 one-day authorisations were issued.

In 1998, 29 500 readers used the Brussels Library's main reading room (a reduction of 11% on 1997) and 4 670 visited the catalogue room (a reduction of 25% on 1997).

15 500 items of bibliographical information were provided in the reading room and 6 200 in the catalogue room.

14 600 items of information were given by telephone from the reading room and 26 100 from the catalogue room.

The fax was used 2 000 times from the reading room and 1 000 times from the catalogue room.

Replies to inquiries by electronic mail totalled 4 800 in the reading room and 1 900 in the catalogue room.

During 1998, the Brussels Library made 5 400 loans to readers.

39 800 works were taken out of storage for consultation at the library in 1998.

366 784 free photocopies were made for internal readers in 1998.

Regarding the management of inter-library loans, 613 requests were made to outside libraries for loans: 396 by the Central Library in Brussels, 25 by the Central Library in Luxembourg, 64 by DG II, 5 by DG III, 28 by DG VI, 11 by DG XIII, 4 by DG XVI and 80 by the Legal Service. Of the 396 requests made by the Central Library in Brussels, 283 were made through the Impala system and 113 through other sources. 365 requests were fulfilled.

During 1998, the Central Library in Brussels also received 134 requests for loans. It was able to provide a positive response to 85.

The Central Library publishes the BIBLIO series. 2 800 copies of issues 1 and 2 of the BIBLIO-Flash series, dedicated to topical subjects, were published. 2 400 copies each of issues 1 to 4 of BIBLIO-Europe, Country Reports and East, respectively devoted to the activities of the European Union, to specific countries and to Eastern Europe, were published.

The Central Library in Luxembourg received 25 000 visitors in 1998.

It carried out approximately 350 searches per month, i.e. an annual total of 4 200 searches. 153 000 free photocopies were produced for readers.

1 200 inter-library loans were carried out.

### ***Data processing***

The launch of ECLAS on the EUROPA internet server on 13 March 1998 was without doubt one of the high points of the year in the sphere of data processing. Access to the database is free and no password is required. Searches can be carried out in English or French, on a simple or advanced level. In both cases on-line guidance is provided. Thesaurus consultation and searches can be carried out on-line. To our knowledge, approximately 150 web sites have so far created a link with the ECLAS database, which gives an indication of its interest for users. The catalogue includes an increasingly large number of entries which are actively linked to a web site. This type of reference is known as an "Internet resource".

The ECLAS version, managed by BASIS software, which was available to the general public via the ECHO server and to officials of the Commission via CAA, has not been accessible since March 1998.

In July 1998 the "Libraries" site was opened on the EUROPA internet server. This site, which is coordinated by the Commission's Central Library, is intended to provide a wide access to the world of libraries. It is so far made up of three pages : the first presents the services provided to the public by the Central Library (including a list of the library's recent acquisitions), the second provides direct access to the ECLAS database and the third introduces the EUROLIB association, including its constitution, its members and their internet sites.

It is planned that the site will include a page on the European Documentation Centres (EDCs) (see Chapter III 3 below) and will provide an electronic information exchange and cooperation forum for librarians and documentalists.

The transition to version 11.c of the MultiLIS library management software in October 1998 has not so far enabled Greek characters to be encoded and processed. The Library will continue its efforts in this connection.

As a result of the provision of DTP equipment, including a scanner, the Central Library in Brussels is planning to produce electronic publications for distribution in web format.

### **3. Management of European Documentation Centres**

Following the efforts made at the end of 1997 to introduce a new EDC management policy, a discussion paper on the development of the network was introduced in July 1998. This paper was included on the agenda of the EDC national representatives' coordination meeting, which was held for the first time in Brussels on 21 and 22 September 1998.

The work of evaluating and reviewing the network has begun, starting with Germany, Italy and France.

National EDC meetings were organised on an ad hoc basis in the Member States and in several non-member countries.

With regard to training, which is essential to the strength of the network, the eighth basic training seminar was organised for EDC staff and a seminar organised with the assistance of the European Public Service Institute in Maastricht was held on 3 and 4 December 1998 to provide EDC staff with additional training.

Grants of ECU 2 000 were awarded to thirty EDCs to enable them to access the EUROPA internet server.

A EUROSTAT CD-ROM update was distributed to all EDCs.

#### **4. Programme and Outlook for 1999**

The world of information in general is conducive to continuing the work begun by the Central Libraries both in Brussels and Luxembourg and the plan for developing the EDC network.

In concrete terms, therefore, 1999 should see a decision to house the Brussels Library in a new building, adapted to modern technical and user requirements and encouraging a sense of openness during the approach to the year 2000. Also in 1999, Unit X.A.6 in Luxembourg will move to the new Bech building and will establish cooperation with EUROSTAT, again resulting in a higher level of public openness.

The "Libraries" internet site will be extended to bring in the European Documentation Centres, acting in partnership with the Commission as distributors of Community information within the Member States and non-member countries.

The ECLAS database will extend its range of services, in particular by the addition of a search function using background information to questions raised, by introducing increasingly frequent links with the full text and making information available in US MARC format.

The Library, through its Presidency of EUROLIB, will continue its efforts to bring its members into closer contact and will endeavour to establish positive areas of cooperation.

Finally, the Library will make an effort to promote its services through the publication of various leaflets relating to the ECLAS and Library sites, as well as the EDCs.

### **ANNEXES**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT - UNIT X.A.6**

Through the Commission's Central Library and networking with other libraries and documentation centres, to offer researchers quality library services based on broad collections and electronic management :

- making available to the Commission and its staff useful information published either in paper format or electronic format;
- responding cost-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 expert assistance and without prior training;
- making the Brussels and Luxembourg collections accessible to other researchers in the field of Community integration, without undermining the quality of the services offered to the Commission and its staff;
- developing co-operation and partnerships between libraries both inside (ReseauBIB) and outside the Commission.

The Unit will also seek to extend its dialogue with the documentalists and librarians of the European Documentation Centre network and the world of libraries so that the European Commission's policy of openness is implemented with a dynamism designed to promote and develop public access to European documentation.

#### **MAIN STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES - UNIT X.A.6**

Neville KEERY Head of Unit

Roland LAURENT Deputy Head of Unit

Isabel LOFF Coordinator, European Documentation Centres

Horst WOHLFEIL Librarian in charge, Luxembourg

#### **RESOURCE FACT SHEET - UNIT X.A.6**

##### **Staff resources (1.2.99)**

Bruxelles

A: 3 ; LA (seconded): 1 ; B: 14 + 1 vacant ; C: 24 ; D: 5

Luxembourg

A: 0 ; B: 2 ; C: 8 + 1 vacant ; D: 2

**Collection/accommodation resources (1.2.99)**

## Brussels

- 1 reading room (62 places) displaying around 3 000 reference works and current periodicals;
- 1 catalogue room permitting consultation of databases;
- some 422 000 volumes ;
- 4 bookstore areas underground (1,625 m2) and an offsite store (rue Vandenbranden: around 2 500 m2)

## Luxembourg

- 1 reading room (32 places) containing 2 500 reference works;
- 1 bookstore area (1 500 m2) containing some 70 000 volumes

**Internet sites**

ECLAS : <http://europa.eu.int/eclas/>

Libraries: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/libraries/bibliotheques\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/libraries/bibliotheques_fr.htm)

**Budget resources 1992-99 (EUR thousand)**

		1992	1993	1994	1995
A-2250	Purchase of books	534	570	544	669
A-2252	Subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals	1 140	1 214	1 097	1 426
A-2253	Subscriptions to press agencies	438	450	450	514
A-2254	Binding	155	168	159	179
A-2255	Subscriptions to and purchases of data	82	99	105	B .4 110 B .8 1 080

**Cataloguing - Language distribution 1998**

<b>LANGUAGES</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>DA</b>	<b>2.65</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>14.95</b>
<b>EL</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>EN</b>	<b>49.63</b>
<b>ES</b>	<b>5.43</b>
<b>FI</b>	<b>1.19</b>
<b>FR</b>	<b>26.18</b>
<b>IT</b>	<b>6.76</b>
<b>NL</b>	<b>3.82</b>
<b>PT</b>	<b>2.15</b>
<b>SV</b>	<b>1.37</b>
<b>Other languages</b>	<b>1.12</b>