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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture,
Education, Information and Sport

on the creation of a Community Library

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- Part B : EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The motion for a resolution tabled by Mr LEONARDI, Mr PAPAPIETRO and others on the creation of a Community Library (Doc. 1-794/82) constitutes an important and urgent incentive for the European Parliament and all other Community Institutions, bodies and institutes. It calls for thought to be given to an effective library policy, relevant to the Community, on which so far not even a start has been made, apart from certain efforts undertaken within the context of the cultural activities of the Council of Europe.
2. The motion for a resolution takes as its starting point 'the need to create ... a store of knowledge and information with a view to closer cultural links within the Community'. This objective - particularly in view of the statements on cultural policy contained in the European Council's Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart (1983) - may be approved. It corresponds with the objectives of previous cultural policy as defined on repeated occasions by the European Parliament and as reflected in earlier resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
3. The authors of this motion for a resolution justify their call for a Community library by reference to cultural policy and library policy, yet think in terms of the concept and structure of libraries as they were in the 19th century; the example they take are the national libraries which exist in most of our Member States and which are used for the collection of, research into and development of literature in the respective national language. The motion for a resolution thus calls for a 'European library to carry out at Community level the functions performed by the national libraries' (without, of course, replacing them), and for Community legislation to make it compulsory for a copy of every book published in the Member States to be deposited in that library. However convincing such a request might appear at first sight in terms of European culture, we must ask ourselves whether it is also really useful and feasible.
4. The authors of the motion for a resolution fail to take account of the new information technology which has now been developed for use in the library sector and is of particular application to a 'Community library'; what is more, they ignore existing libraries and documentation centres which specialize in European studies and fail to include in their considerations the collaboration

between the major western European research libraries (LIBER) developed by the Council of Europe, and they have clearly not taken sufficient account of users' specific needs - for the purpose of study, research or documentation - with regard to texts relating to Europe.

5. Within the academic libraries in Europe (as has already happened in the USA and Japan) technological innovations are being used to an increasing extent. It is, today, inconceivable that libraries should operate according to the methods of the nineteenth century if they are to meet the academic requirements of their readers. Without the utilization of new technologies, the processing of the ever-increasing number of books is not only impossible but neither acceptable nor helpful to the user. As a result, developments in library technology, i.e. the utilization of the EDP and the new communications media, is not only conceivable for a 'Community library' but today offers the sole opportunity of using it really effectively, i.e. providing a user-friendly service. What is more, the use of this technology will enable the financial expenditure to be held within acceptable limits.

A Community library, of which the specific tasks are still to be defined, will not only have to use modern EDP technologies such as Euronet DIANE, but would also have to be incorporated in the existing EURYDICE system.

6. In the Community of the Ten, there is no lack of libraries which concentrate on European affairs. Not only do the European Parliament, Commission, Council and Court of Justice, etc., have European affairs libraries of varying sizes, national libraries and most major universities and institutes of higher education also have library sections devoted to European affairs. The number of such libraries, where the main field of the collection partly overlaps and which have achieved the status of European documentation centres or libraries of deposit, amounts nevertheless to some 500. Since 1963, all of these libraries have been receiving a compulsory copy of every document published by the Community Institutions in the official language of their choice with the exception of scientific publications, of which they receive only a selection. Institutes of higher education, which contribute to the unification of Europe as European documentation centres, have long been established as recognized research and teaching institutes in the field of European integration.

7. The facilities of a future Community library system should extend well beyond those of existing national establishments. Nonetheless, the various existing library systems should be investigated as to their possible use for a European

library system of this nature, for example the library inter-lending systems in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany. Experience gained through the cultural activities of the Council of Europe and the cooperation it has fostered between the major Western European research libraries (LIBER) should also be evaluated for its possible contribution to a system of this nature.

8. The immense costs involved in the implementation of the ideas set out in the motion for a resolution on the creation of a Community reference library, which at present could not be funded nor, in my opinion, justified, are not the only issue here; the question of the European need must be central to considerations concerning the creation of a European library. That should lead us to a consideration of the form and capability of a future Community library. In other words, information must be obtained on what is lacking in the libraries in the Community in terms of books dealing with European affairs which is hampering research, teaching and documentation and how, in conjunction with the Council of Europe, the problem could be solved by the creation of a Community library.

9. The creation of a 'European library' (EL) should, therefore, not involve a Community-wide accumulation of the principle of national libraries - just imagine what kind of a building would be needed to house all those books! It would, therefore, not be necessary to enact legislation making it 'compulsory to deposit one or more copies of every book published within the Community' - who would really benefit from having the umpteenth medical doctoral thesis on some statistical analysis or other available in Danish in Florence or Strasbourg as well?

10. Function and mode of operation

In view of the foregoing, the 'European library' should not work like a traditional, comprehensively orientated national reference library at Community level; it should provide a computerized library information system which could be interrogated from peripherals and hold comprehensive data on books dealing with European affairs in precisely defined areas of European activity. To this end, consideration should be given to introducing a requirement to forward references, rather than copies of books, to the library. The Commission should be requested to draw up proposals to this effect, and submit them to the Council.

The proposed information system should be a combined system consisting of, on the one hand,

- a central collection of literature relevant to Europe in the form of a data bank with a European central catalogue to provide information and answer inquiries, and on the other hand,
- a clearing-house for an efficient system linking national libraries, the libraries of the Community institutions, the European University Institute, documentation centres and other major libraries.

It should be possible for all the affiliated libraries to interrogate this system on all published works, including articles in specialist journals - later also in the form of summaries. This system should be constantly updated by means of corrections, the incorporation of new editions, etc. The future field of duties of the European library should be defined in such a way and elaborated in library terms so that it is capable of being extended and corrected.

The 'European library' should have the following functions:

- to provide an indexing service to show enquirers where they can find relevant literature and documentation ('awareness service'), and
- to compile a complete information package to meet an enquirer's requirements and supply this in the most economical manner ('delivery service').

11. Organizational principle

The fields covered by the 'European library' should initially include history and civilization, law and economics, the political and social sciences and general cultural and literary studies. The documents and studies drawn up by and on behalf of the European Communities should also be included and available for consultation. In addition, of course, the International Standards Book Number (ISBN) system of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the UNESCO proposals should be taken into account. A consistent library classification system is a 'sine qua non' if the proposed library association is to function in future, with the projected 'European library' as its centrepiece.

Apart from documents concerning the current state of political development in Europe, the latest fields of activity in European policy should be successively incorporated. This would cover EPC activities, the development of the three

Conventions of Lomé and questions connected with European peace talks or security policy, or those concerning developments in Eastern Europe.

12. Cooperation

From the outset, particular attention should be given to relations and cooperation between the 'European library' and other libraries. This should involve, first and foremost, closer cooperation between the libraries involved at the development stage of the projected library association. Close cooperation of this kind would also enable optimum use to be made of the limited pool of resources and qualified staff available.

It would also be sensible, however, to establish cooperation from the outset with major libraries in third countries, particularly the US Library of Congress.

Finally, proposals should be drawn up for Community initiatives for the development of library facilities in developing countries, particularly the ACP states, with the possibility of their being eventually affiliated to the proposed system.

13. The role of the Commission

The Commission of the EC has an important role to play in preparations for the creation of a 'European library'. This role consists primarily in drawing up proposals for the solution of problems, with regard to library loans and the various laws of copyright. In the latter area, consideration would need to be given to the harmonization of copyright law in order to overcome the problem of transmitting photographic or photostat reproductions of documents, and particularly of works used for study purposes.

A specialist body would have to be set up for this purpose, consisting of representatives of the libraries of the Community institutions, the national libraries, other research institutes focussing on Europe, and the LIBER network. responsibility for establishing the European library and defining its tasks in detail should be entrusted to this specialist body.

In connection with this proposed European library system, the Commission should also be asked to draw up proposals immediately with a view to harmonizing the training of librarians and standardizing the definition of librarianship.

14. Location

On practical, financial and political grounds, the site chosen for the European library ought to be a place in which European structures already exist and are capable of being developed.

Since 1979, in its debates on cultural affairs and, most recently, during the debate on the SPINELLI report on the European Union (September 1983), the European Parliament has concerned itself closely with the objectives of Community activities in the cultural field. A Community library will find its cultural justification within this framework, all the more so since in its Solemn Declaration in Stuttgart (1983), the European Council decided that cultural policy also fell within the terms of reference of the European Community.

The European University Institute, together with the future European Foundation, heads the list of specific activities to be encouraged. The Declaration states: 'with a view to complementing Community action ..., the Heads of State or Government agree to promote, encourage or facilitate the following, taking account of respective constitutional provisions: development of the activities of the European Foundation and the European University Institute in Florence' (point 3.3).

This demonstrates a priority of the Council, which will surely secure the agreement of the European Parliament and the Commission, that the research and academic centre in Florence should be extended; apart from the University Institute, which was founded 7 years ago, the historical archives of the Community Institutions will also be located there and, in addition, the European Press Archive is being extended at the BADIA.

To this could be added the European library as a separate institution whose users would also benefit from the University Institute's reference library. This would provide a centre for research, teaching and documentation which would be of political importance not only for the more restricted field of the Ten but for other institutions, especially those working within the framework of the Council of Europe.

The European University Institute in Florence also offers a suitable location for the European library because it is a specialist European library with an exemplary classification system. The EDP-based system of cooperation with several national libraries which is already practised there could also

serve as a nucleus for the proposed new library association. Finally, it is practical both on technical and geographical grounds to make the central collection and clearing-house for a European library system an integral part of the European University Institute. The necessary premises near the BADIA already exist, and would have to be adapted and arranged for use by the new library.

15. The legal basis

The European Library should be established as an independent Community Institution; consideration could be given to the cost of its establishment being shared equally between the Member States and the European Community, as was the case for the European University Institute.

It would also be worthwhile to consider whether Article 235 of the EEC Treaty should serve as the legal basis for all the institutions in Florence - the European University Institute, the Community archives and the proposed European library - in accordance with the European Parliament's decision of principle.

16. Funding

The European library needs and will need, particularly in its initial phase, financial support from the Community. In order to guarantee its funding in future, a new budget line will have to be created, which will appear next to the lines for the University Institute and the archives. An appropriation should be entered on the budget for 1985.

17. Further details

- (a) The Commission should be asked to draw up proposals concerning the practical details involved in creating the library and to assist the proposed specialized body in that task.
- (b) The Commission should also embark on negotiations with the appropriate Italian authorities as regards accommodation.

(c) In addition to the foregoing, it would also appear sensible to attach to the European library a cinema library and a film library formed from public and private donations. This idea stems from the late 'oldest member' of the European Parliament, Louise Weiss, who confided it shortly before she died to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport, of which she had been a member since its inception. Her idea was to create a 'bank' of masterpieces from all over the world, consisting of television films which the Member States' respective television authorities had produced for broadcast in their own countries, and of which they would deposit copies in the cinema library. These TV films would show the development of civilization as an aspect of the history of nations, and demonstrate that works of arts are every people's heritage. Members of the public could then either watch these films on the spot or borrow them. The cinema library would also subsequently function as a source of material for the many cultural programmes which should eventually be broadcast in Europe by DBS or cable television.