



**The Committee for the Support of Libraries:
a model of library networking in Greece**

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Meeting:

**162. Management of Library Associations, Continuing
Professional Development and Workplace Learning and ALP**

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 75TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL
23-27 August 2009, Milan, Italy
<http://www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/index.htm>

Abstract:

*This paper is a presentation of the **COMMITTEE FOR the SUPPORT OF LIBRARIES (CSL)** which is an international organization working in Greece. I am giving this presentation on behalf of the Committee. We think it is important to present the **CSL** and its activities to a broader audience at the IFLA Conference in Milan 2009 as it could be envisaged as a model of library networking aiming at strengthening the management of library associations in order to make associations stronger players in the development of libraries and thus in the development of the society in this part of the world.*

HISTORY

The CSL was founded in 2003. Representatives of Greek and international organizations united to assist in the development of libraries (i.e. public, academic, school libraries) in Greece by sharing their experiences with Greek colleagues and peers.

Libraries are today facing increasing pressures as well as difficulties in securing ample funds. Attracting new audiences, developing additional services and evaluating library activities are among the topics that are of increased interest to libraries and librarians in many countries around the world. A number of ns and programs already exists and they can be transferred from one country to another. The exchange of ideas and experiences is undoubtedly the key to effective solutions of common problems.

For this reason, it was necessary to form a Steering Committee of representatives of Greek and international organizations which would assist in the development of libraries in Greece.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, the Committee organized two international conferences in 2003 and 2004 at the Goethe-Institut in Athens.

At the end of 2004, the Committee was reorganized and got a new name: “Committee for the Support of Libraries”, with the intention of expanding its activities in other areas of library interest.

MEMBERS

The Committee is comprised of information professionals, including librarians, heads of libraries and other professional profiles from Greek and foreign cultural institutions operating in Athens.

The Committee’s members are:

- Goethe-Institut Athen
- Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki
- Instituto Cervantes de Atenas
- Institut Français d'Athènes
- Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Atene
- IRC U.S. Embassy, Athens
- The Netherlands Institute Athens
- Ministry for Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH)
- Association of Greek Librarians (E.E.B.E.P.)
- National Library of Greece
- National Documentation Centre (EKT)
- National Book Centre (E.KE.BI.)
- European Commission - Representation in Greece



The Committee at work

Structure

The CSL can also be considered a model of equal representation and co-operation of the institutions that comprise it. Part of the Committee's philosophy is that the professional common interest is a strong incentive to make cooperation work. Therefore, we have chosen deliberately not to institutionalize it. There is a website www.goethe.de/synergasia, a mission statement and we have regular meetings – this is all the structure necessary to create a group of library and information professionals that works harmoniously. The Committee members have a strong commitment, which has resulted in a strong impact on the Greek library scene. All participating institutions see the common value of this initiative, each supports the committee members and each finances the Committee's series of events.

Being committed to a free and open exchange of information, the Committee's main purpose is to assist Greek libraries in their efforts to modernize and to provide the best possible services. With a dynamic program of speakers, including library and information professionals and specialists from various countries, the committee organizes international conferences, workshops, panel discussions and lectures that present the latest developments in library and information science. Our annual international conferences encourage productive interaction and collaboration across the entire spectrum of libraries and educational organizations, so that Greek libraries can become learned information centers in their respective communities.

MISSION STATEMENT

Being committed to free and open exchange of information, the Committee's main goal is to contribute to the modernization and development of Greek libraries and information centers in their efforts to provide quality services to their users/clients.

The CSL was created to foster:

- local and international cooperation in the field of library science
- the exchange of ideas and experiences as a key to effective solutions of common problems
- opportunities for professional development and continuing education.

Through continuous interaction and collaboration with the entire spectrum of libraries, educational organizations and other institutions and by establishing an open channel of communication with library and information professionals from all over Europe, the efforts of the Committee focus on helping Greek libraries become learned information centers for the dissemination of information and the diffusion of knowledge in their respective communities.

ACTIVITIES

The Committee meets regularly once a month, even twice when it is necessary, to discuss and organize the activities which are: an annual international conference and the publication of an online journal **Synergasia**.

Then we have a website available in two languages, Greek and English, to communicate with Greek librarians and the rest of the world, kindly hosted on the Goethe-Institute Greece website: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/gr/lp/prj/syn/enindex.htm>

SYNERGASIA

The Committee's goal to keep abreast of the latest developments in the library world and to attract professionals to support its activities is fulfilled with the publication of the online journal **SYNERGASIA**, where you can find current topics that interest information professionals.

SYNERGASIA is the Greek word for 'co-operation'. It was launched in April 2006 and it is one of two Greek library journals, the other being the journal of the Greek Library Association. It is published three times per year; each issue has a specific theme or subject. **Synergasia** is comprised of five sections: interviews, articles, library profiles, news and recently EU news. The interview and the articles sections are related to the issue's theme. Although the language of the journal is Greek, we solicit and publish contributions from our international colleagues and peers (e.g. France, Italy, Greece, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and the USA).

The webpage for **SYNERGASIA** is: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/gr/lp/prj/syn/ozs/enindex.htm>

Those who want to remain informed of our activities and of the online journal can subscribe to the *Synergasia Newsletter*.

CONFERENCES

Since its beginning, the Committee has organized a highly successful conference every year with a program of information professionals from several countries, to present the latest developments in information technology and libraries. Beside this big event, smaller events like lectures, workshops or panel discussions have also been offered to the Greek library community and beyond. Until now the activities have reached more than 1500 librarians in 120 libraries from all over Greece.

The CSL conferences have now become institutionalized events as they host distinguished Greek and foreign speakers, eager to inform Greek librarians on current issues related to role and function of today's libraries. It is possible to register for the conference online on our site. Registration for the conference is free.

To give a complete picture of the CSL past activities, what follows is the list of events organized so far by the Committee which have all been under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religion:

- **2003, June 2-4:** 1st International Conference '**Library Services for the Community**', in Athens
- **2004, May 24-26:** 2nd International Conference '**Libraries and Lifelong Learning**', in Athens
- **2005:** six workshops all over Greece under the overall title '**International partnerships – regional networks**' in the cities of Thessaloniki, Veria, Sparta, Tycherio, Kavala and Koropi.

- **2006, June 14-16:** 3rd International Conference ‘**Information Literacy - the Key to Lifelong Learning**’ in Athens
- **2006, October 13th** : Seminar ‘**EU-DILLMULI PROJECT, Dissemination of Lifelong Learning Activities in Museums and Libraries**’, with best practice examples from the Dillmul project, in Athens
- **2007:** two main events under the overall title of ‘**Libraries as Crossroads of Cultures - Serving diverse groups and needs**’:
 - **May 15th** , a **Panel Discussion** in Athens
 - **May 17-18**, 4th International Conference in Thessaloniki, in the context of the annual International Book Fair.
- **2008, June 10-11:** 5th International conference ‘**Designing Libraries of the Future**’ in Athens. As a side event of the conference, the Goethe Institut in Athens presented the photography exhibition “*Library’s Vision*”. The duration of the exhibition was 9-22 June 2008.
- **2008, December 1st:** Conference: ‘**Library Architecture: From vision to reality**’ in Thessaloniki.
- **2009, June 11-12:** 6th International conference ‘**Library Policies: from local to national**’ in Athens.

PAST EVENTS

Year 2003

The CSL organized its 1st International Conference in Athens from the 2nd to the 4th of June on the topic ‘**Library Services for the Community**’.

Seven foreign speakers from France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and the USA gave best-practice examples of new and innovative services. The six Greek speakers gave an introduction about the kind of services provided in libraries in Greece. In the afternoon of the three conference days, the foreign speakers chaired workshops to give the participants the possibility to intensify the exchange of experiences.

258 library professionals took part in the conference: 53 came from 32 public libraries, 44 from special libraries, 33 from university libraries, 32 from school libraries, 21 from the National Library. 20 of the participants were students of Library Science, 54 came from other areas.

The conference theme was chosen because we thought that Public and Municipal Libraries can play a decisive role in the development of the Community. Almost no other public institution has the responsibility of reaching various levels of social groups in order to offer research and information services. Libraries are in a better position to know and recognize the needs of their users and are able to adjust their services accordingly so that their mission can

be successful. The conference aimed at presenting the best paradigms on the subject from Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United States. These paradigms were enhanced by presentations of the latest developments in Greece as well. In addition, the various topics were analyzed in detail during short but comprehensive workshops. The conference intended to provide Greek librarians with the opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues from other countries and to learn new ways to improve the services offered to the public by their individual libraries.

Year 2004

In 2004 the committee organized its 2nd International Conference under the topic '*Libraries and Lifelong Learning*'. The importance of information in the 21st century is undeniable. The use of information is a key factor for the professional development of the individual and the economic development of society itself. The real challenge is the enormous amount of information, which is growing constantly, and the amount of obsolete information also growing at the same rate. Information deemed useful today, has to be reexamined tomorrow for relevance and accuracy. Lifelong learning is the answer for the effective use of information and the development of professionalism. One of the greatest challenges of our times is the ability to provide equal and free access to information and therefore an opportunity for lifelong learning. It is the only way to avoid building a society divided between information-rich and information-poor individuals.

Public libraries should be local gateways to knowledge and should play a leading role in the lifelong learning process. Generally, public libraries in Greece are still considered to be places for leisure rather than places for dynamic learning, competent and comprehensive advice. Public libraries, however, should develop in a way that will enable every member of the society to achieve his or her potential.

The conference took place from May 24th to 26th at the Goethe-Institut in Athens. Nine foreign speakers from Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Spain and the USA gave their presentations in the morning and ran ten short workshops for small groups in the afternoon, in order to deepen and extend the discussion. Four speakers from Greece supplemented the activities in the area of lifelong learning in Greek institutions outside of libraries, i.e. the Greek Open University.

The conference was addressed to librarians working in Greek public libraries and hoped to provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, ideas, techniques and methods of promoting the spread of information.

A total of 346 information professionals participated in the conference: 102 came from 57 public libraries, 82 from special libraries, 59 from university libraries, 16 from school libraries, 19 from the National Library. 32 of the participants were Students of Library Science, 36 participants came from other areas.

As a result we expected that the librarians would be able to implement new strategies to meet the upcoming challenges of our times.

Year 2005

Public Libraries: International Partnerships and Regional Networks

In 2005, instead of a conference the Committee decided to organize six workshops all over Greece. The workshops took place in the cities of Thessaloniki, Veria, Sparta, Tychero, Kavala and Koropi. Eight foreign speakers from France, Germany, Spain and the USA conducted the workshops. In addition, four lectures were offered by the speakers in Athens.

More than 150 library professionals from over 40 libraries participated in the workshops. Almost 200 librarians came to the lectures.

- **Thessaloniki:** ... 83 participants from 15 libraries
- **Veria:** 13 participants from 8 libraries
- **Sparta:** 16 participants from 3 libraries
- **Tychero:** 8 participants from 8 libraries
- **Kavala:** 16 participants from 3 libraries
- **Koropi:** 20 participants from 8 libraries
- **Athens:** 200 participants

The program entitled *Public Libraries: International Partnerships and Regional Networks* was a collaboration between Public and Municipal Libraries in Greece and the ‘Committee for the Support of Libraries’ and it aimed at transferring international experiences to Greek professional librarians, through a series of workshops and seminars which were conducted by foreign experts and took place in various parts of Greece.

Those Public Libraries participating in the program had themselves chosen the topics which they considered essential for their operation and further development. An Organizing Committee was set up which had the responsibility of coordinating and evaluating the entire operation and of producing printed and advertising materials. The foreign cultural institutions in Greece had the responsibility of selecting and inviting experts from other countries, who would speak and offer pertinent workshops in various Greek cities, as required, and pay for their travel expenses. The participating libraries were responsible for the local organization of the workshops and the other activities related to the program as well as for covering the costs for overnight accommodation of the speakers and the translators. Library employees from public libraries of each particular area were invited to attend the workshops.

Here follows the Program of the events that, together with the outcomes of the Workshops and Seminars, were published on the website so that all the relevant information would be available to librarians and scholars concerned with libraries in Greece.

Programme	
April, 4, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ Public Library Programming for Adults – Purpose and Function in Diverse Markets</p> <p>Location: Dimotiki Bibliothiki Thessaloniki Speaker: Martín J Gómez, Urban Libraries Council Co-organiser: IRC U.S. Embassy Athens</p>
April, 7, 2005 Lecture	<p>▶ Library Networking</p> <p>Location: Hellenic American Union, Athens Speaker: Martin Gomez, Urban Library Council Co-organizer: IRC U.S. Embassy Athens</p>
May, 16, 2005 Lecture	<p>▶ New Services – New Developments : French–German Cooperation in the Field of Libraries</p> <p>Location: Institut Français d'Athène Speaker: Christelle Di Pietro, Public Library of Lyon and Christa Willers, Director of the public library in Stuttgart-Vaihingen Co-organizer: Institut Français d'Athènes and Goethe-Institut Athen with the support of the 'Elysée-Project'</p>
May, 17, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ The 'Window of Knowledge': bringing the library to your home</p> <p>Location: Dimosia Kentriki Bibliothiki Veria Speaker: Christelle Di Pietro, Public Library of Lyon ("Guichet du savoir"-Project) Co-organizer: Institut Français d'Athènes</p>
June, 2, 2005 Discussion	<p>▶ Possibilities of developing a library network—using a local area network</p> <p>Location: Dimosia Kentriki Bibliothiki Sparta Speaker: Ramona Domínguez Sanjurjo, Director of the Public Library Salamanca Co-organizer: Instituto Cervantes</p>
June, 3, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ The local and community information: services, development and opportunities of networking</p> <p>Location: Dimosia Kentriki Bibliothiki Sparta Speaker: Ramona Domínguez Sanjurjo, Director of the Public Library Salamanca Co-organizer: Instituto Cervantes</p>

June, 6, 2005 Lecture	<p>▶ Focusing on the user: experiences in the Public Library "Casa de las Conchas" Salamanca Spain</p> <p>Location: Goethe-Institut Athen Speaker: Ramona Domínguez Sanjurjo, Director of the Public Library Salamanca Co-organizer: Instituto Cervantes</p>
June, 10, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ The Library as Information Center</p> <p>Location: Dimotiki Bibliothiki Tychemo (Evros) Speaker: Susanne Delp, Director of the Public Library in Rosenheim Co-organizer: Goethe-Institut Athen</p>
September, 29 – 30, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ How to find out, what customers want and need and how to evaluate the library services</p> <p>Location: Dimotiki Bibliothiki Kavala Speaker: Meinhard Motzko, Consultant Co-organizer: Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki</p>
September, 30, 2005 Workshop	<p>▶ Library Advocacy</p> <p>Location: Dimotiki Bibliothiki Koropi Speaker: Marge Melun, U.S. IRC Rome Co-organizer: IRC U.S. Embassy Athens</p>

Year 2006

Information Literacy - the Key to Lifelong Learning

In 2006 the Committee organized its 3rd International Conference on the topic '**Information Literacy - the Key to Lifelong Learning**'. The conference took place from June 14th to 16th at the Goethe-Institut in Athens. Speakers from Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Germany, France, Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States presented initiatives undertaken by public libraries in their countries and best practice examples on the nature of information literacy. Besides formal papers, the conference included a number of workshops which gave participants the opportunity for hands-on involvement in the practical development of these new literacies. Around 250 participants from 50 libraries came to the conference.

EU-DILLMULI PROJECT

Dissemination of Lifelong Learning Activities in Museums and Libraries

Recent research suggests that cultural institutions such as Libraries, Museums, Cultural centers etc. are considered by adult learners as more accessible and friendly learning environments than traditional educational institutions. Libraries are by far more accessible than all the others.

Past pilot projects have dealt with these issues and have produced added value which often stays either within the persons and institutions involved in the project or within particular

sectors or regions. The main goal of the **DILLLMULI** project is to transfer and disseminate this knowledge and know-how to those professionally concerned, who may act as multipliers.

On October 13th, 2006 at the Goethe-Institut, a transnational meeting of the **DILLLMULI** project in Athens was combined with a one-day seminar under the title: **National Seminar for Lifelong Learning in Libraries and Museums** which presented results and best practice examples from EU projects in the context of Lifelong Learning.

Year 2007

Libraries as Crossroads of Cultures - Serving diverse groups and needs

In 2007 the the Committee organized two main events under the overall title of **‘Libraries as Crossroads of Cultures - Serving diverse groups and needs’** : a Panel Discussion and the annual conference.

The **Panel Discussion "Library Services to Immigrants"** took place in Athens on may 15th at the Institut Français d’Athènes.



The Panel Discussion

Participants to the panel discussion:

Eleftheria Bernidaki-Aldous, Member of Greek Parliament (MP Nation- Wide) and Chairman of the Special Standing Committee on Issues Concerning the Handicapped

[Sandra Rios Balderrama](#), Library Consultant, Former ALA diversity officer, United States

Rena Horemi-Thomopoulou, Director, Public Library N. Philadelphias

[Anne-Marie Schmidt](#), Aarhus/Denmark, Public Library

[Florence Schreiber](#), Director of the Libraries Network of Saint-Denis (Paris-suburb)

[Heleni Tzinieri Tzanetakou](#), Director, Central Public Library of Sparti

Moderator:

Lori Keza, Journalist (To Vima)

The 4th International Conference was held at the HELEXPO in Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece, on May 17 – 18 in the context of the International Book Fair.

276 participants took part in the conference: 32 came from public libraries, 14 from special libraries, 32 from university libraries, 15 from school libraries, 13 from state public libraries. 95 of the participants were students of Library Science, 75 came from other areas.

The theme of the conference concentrated on libraries as accessible public institutions and as places where a number of services and devices are offered which, if appropriately developed and adapted for people of diverse groups and needs, can have a positive impact on creating real integration.

Libraries as crossroads of cultures help support the integration of people of all origins and people with special needs. Intercultural dialogue, lifelong learning, integration and equal opportunity are not just buzzwords. These are actually feasible practices and services provided in a library.

With the increased demand for life-long-learning techniques and the continuous development of technology, there are groups of people facing the threat of marginalization. Elderly people, who are not technologically savvy, immigrants with limited language skills and handicapped people, who need special equipment to access information – they could all find assistance and guidance in libraries and, therefore, become active and well-informed citizens.



Speakers at the Conference in Thessaloniki

Year 2008

Designing Libraries of the Future

The Committee for the Support of Libraries (CSL) organized its 5th conference in June 2008. The topic of the conference was **“Designing Libraries of the Future”**. The goal was to present the latest trends in library architecture and to ensure a modern and functional environment that could serve and attract more users.

The conference addressed the following topics:

- the architecture of libraries (environmental-friendly buildings, internal decoration, refurbishment of old buildings, accessibility by people with special needs)
- strategic planning (standards, programs for building/reconstruction)
- librarians’ role in the planning process (co-operation between the librarian and the architect, how technology affects the setup of libraries)
- libraries serving various needs of their communities, financing
- best practice examples both in Greece and abroad

The conference was also related with the announcement of the major project building of the new National Library of Greece by Stavros Niarchos Foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

As side program of the conference, at the atrium of the National Hellenic Research Foundation the Goethe Institut Athen presented the photography exhibition **“Library’s Vision”**. Photographs of 23 impressive architectural ideas of libraries in the digital era were displayed.



The photo exhibit

We hoped that our conference would signal a constructive dialog that would enable Greek librarians to get new and useful ideas, applicable to their workplaces and capable to transform them into libraries of a near future.

The 5th International Conference of the Committee for the Support of Libraries (CSL)) ended up with much success. More than 240 people participated in the conference, mostly Greek librarians.

Apart from the Greek lecturers, many speakers shared their experiences from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and the USA. Common topic of all papers was that libraries change their image concerning both buildings and functions. The formerly traditional function of libraries, i.e. to provide access to books and print material, remains the nucleus around which the necessity to develop various activities is arisen. Those activities go beyond the formal information and education and are spread to actions related to entertainment, culture and social contact.

Library Architecture: From vision to reality Conference



On December 1st, 2008 a conference on: **Library Architecture: Form vision to reality** was held at the Goethe - Institut in Thessaloniki, which is the second big city in Greece.

This chosen topic was based on the idea that the design, the construction and the organization of a new library and its successful implementation requires excellent collaboration of all parts: architects, librarians, administration, as well as library users. Only then a library can be ideal for everyone.

Nowadays, two factors affect library design:

- a) the development of new technologies that redefine library's role and influence its' services, and
- b) users that require modern, interactive and trendy library places.

The conference speakers came from various types of Libraries. They presented the process that their libraries followed in designing a new building or revamping an old one and they provided an insight of the whole course of action.

Year 2009

'Library Policies: from local to national'

For the 6th consecutive year the Committee for the Support of Libraries organized an International Conference entitled: **Library Policies: from local to national**. The conference took place on June 11th and 12th, at the Auditorium of the French Institute, in Athens.

Library policies are integral for the successful operation of a library, especially on a national level, as they define its organizational framework and its strategic plan. These policies refer to both general and specific topics; they guide library functions, provide guidelines for a common direction and assist in proper planning. Consequently, library policies are a necessity, especially with rapid development of technologies, which affects directly the operational aspects of the library.

Internationally recognized speakers from Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the USA described library policies as they are implemented in their countries, the impact of library policies in services of local libraries and their experiences of the application of policies either at national level or by type of libraries.

SPRING EVENT

The work of the *Committee for Support of Libraries* is becoming increasingly appreciated all over Greece and is reaching out of the boundaries of Greece. Its activity is arising more and more interest in the library community all over the world. The international speakers who have come to our annual conferences once back to their countries report about this unique reality which is now starting to be seen as a model of international partnership and regional network. It happened also with the former Information Officer at the United States Embassy in Rome, Myra M. Brown, who came to conference in Thessaloniki in 2007 and was enthusiast about what the Committee was able to do.

As evidence of that, the CSL has been invited to talk about its activities at several conferences in Greece and abroad. On April 11th 2008, as representative of the Committee I was invited to give a talk at the **1st International Meeting ‘Spring event: 21st Information professionals’** held at the American University of Rome, Italy. The event was organized by the American University of Rome, the Information Resource Center at the United States Embassy to Italy and the University of ‘Roma Tre’.

The aim of the event was to provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of best practices on the emerging trends in the library profession in the 21st century.

The meeting had a multidisciplinary nature. The main topics dealt with were: Social Networking, Information literacy and Multimedia & Web2.0 technologies in libraries and they were covered at both the theoretical and applied levels. The official language of conference was Italian and the lecturers presented academic and research libraries and library networks.

The meeting was a very successful one since it brought together librarians and information professionals from Italy, Greece, Malta and the U.S. to consolidate a regional library community. It was of particular interest to researchers and students in university departments of Library and Information Science, and to practicing librarians.

The event was organized in a very professional way from several points of view, but the technological and communication aspect of it was particularly impressive. In fact, The Workshop Proceedings were published online on a blog that was created on purpose for the event. On this blog, long before the event took place, communication among the organizers and the speakers was established at both professional and personal levels with the possibility of letting other members of the library community join and participate. During the conference all the presentations were recorded and broadcast streamline and after the event communication and exchange of information was still going on and even enhanced while more people joined in.

In conclusion, being invited at the 1st International Meeting in Rome gave us the chance to tell a broader international audience about the work of the *Committee for Support of Libraries* for the first time.

Visit to Bruxelles

The European dimension of the CSL is easily visible as the Greek Representation of the European Commission is one of the founding members. The committee visualises itself as a European initiative, having members of five European countries and bringing speakers from many more.

We thought that it would be a very valuable experience for the group to get in closer contact with the European Commission in Brussels and to learn more about EU initiatives and programmes. With such an exposure, the work of the Greek Committee would be more relevant for the Greek library professionals and it would widen the range of exchange amongst colleagues.

So in 2007 we submitted an application to Brussels in the context of the group visits organized by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture and in 2008 the Committee was chosen to be among the 3 groups that would participate from Greece.

Finally, the Members of the CSL went on an **Information visit to the European Institutions in Brussels** from the 15th to 17th of July 2008. The visit was organized by the DIRECTORATE GENERAL Communication of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION Representation in Greece in collaboration with the Directorate General Education & Culture of the European Commission in Brussels. The program of the visit was tailored on purpose for *'Librarians & Ministry of Education'* to match the interests of the participants so that beside the European Parliament's building and other Institutions they had the chance to see also the **Central Library of the European Commission** and to be informed about the **Commission's Digital Libraries Initiative and the** Intercultural Dialogue. We strongly believe that this visit had a very high educational and informative value for our Committee.

Partners

The Committee for the Support of Libraries also encourages interaction with library-related groups in other countries in order to build a 'network of networks', therefore further enhancing communication between librarians and information specialists globally.

In 2005, the committee started working closely with the Turkish **Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group (ILIPG)**. The group consists of foreign institutes present in Turkey, important libraries, and cultural and educational institutions. A first 'virtual' meeting of the two groups took place during a teleconference on February 21, 2006.

The 'Committee for the Support of Libraries' and the 'Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group' exchange regularly information about their activities and future plans. A member of the ILIPG presented a paper at the committee's conference, which took place in Athens in June 2006.

FUTURE PLANS

In a nutshell, the following are the plans that the CSL cultivates for the future:

Workshops

Sharing international experience – Encouraging local networks

Developments

- Extension of the network through new national and international partners.
- Collaboration with similar committees in other countries.

Improvements

- Exchange of information with other library organizations to avoid overlapping of activities.
- Improvement and regular update of our website, with a link to the websites of all committee members and major library institutions.

Cooperation

- Make a better use our network in order to reach more libraries.
- Share activities with Greek organizations in similar fields of interest.

Financing

- Keep a budget contribution of 50% equally shared both by Greek partners (i.e. the EKEBI, the Ministry, the EC-Representation and the other Greek organizations) and foreign organizations.
- Find one or even more sponsors to secure the continuation of our activities.

USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.goethe.de/synergasia> = The CSL website

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/gr/lp/prj/syn/ozs/enindex.htm> = Synergasia, online journal

<http://www.library.itu.edu.tr/ilipg/> = Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group (ILIPG)

<http://www.dillmuli.feek.pte.hu/> = DILLLMULI

http://www.eaea.org/index.php?k=4821&%20projekti_id=3374 = EAEA - European Association for Education of Adults