



Australian Library and Information Association

EU REJECTS INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION TO LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE COPYRIGHT PROBLEMS; CAUSES COLLAPSE OF WIPO MEETING

Tuesday 6 May 2014

Discussions by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Standing Committee on Copyright & Related Rights (SCCR) broke down in the early hours of Saturday morning 3 May, after the European Union (EU) attempted to block future discussion of copyright laws to aid libraries and archives fulfill their missions in the digital environment.

Library and archive delegations from Europe, Latin America, Australia, the United States, Canada and the UK attended the 27th meeting of the SCCR from 28 April – 2 May 2014, to push for an international treaty to help libraries and archives preserve cultural heritage, facilitate access to essential information by people wherever they are in the world.

The meeting ended in disarray at 1:30am on Saturday morning, after the EU tried to have crucial references to “text-based” work on copyright exceptions removed from the meeting conclusions - a move viewed by other Member States and library and archive NGOs present as an attempt to delay, if not derail, any progress on copyright exceptions at WIPO.

Dr. Stuart Hamilton, Deputy Secretary General of the **International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions (IFLA)** commented:

“For the past three years, Member States have been looking at draft texts on copyright exceptions for libraries and archives. The EU is now trying to pretend these don’t exist. We’re frustrated, and deeply disappointed. It appears the EU came to WIPO with one goal in mind: to kill the discussion.”

The EU’s attempt to sideline discussion of copyright exceptions at WIPO is particularly concerning in light of the ongoing review of copyright laws at the EU level.

Dr Paul Ayris, President of LIBER, the **Association of European Research Libraries**, expressed his disappointment:

“The position taken by the EU delegation in Geneva contrasts strongly with current discussions at European level, where it has been recognised that copyright exceptions for libraries are essential, and must be harmonised in order to facilitate international research and innovation in the age of Science 2.0. The conservative position taken at SCCR 27 is therefore deeply disappointing. It does not support research and education and hampers European researchers in their use of new tools and services.”

Teresa Hackett, EIFL-IP Programme Manager added:

“Libraries in developing and transition countries seek a level playing field to provide people with information needed for education, research and development. As appeals by developing countries to progress work on libraries and archives were ignored, the EU’s motto seems to be “Do as we say, not as we do”. Advancing the goal of equal access to knowledge for all must urgently be brought back on track at WIPO”.

The SCCR has been discussing a possible legal instrument to safeguard copyright exceptions and limitations for libraries and archives since 2009. It is due to submit recommendations to the WIPO General Assembly in September 2014.

Quotes from library and archive organizations who were represented: www.eifl.net/sccr27-additional-quotes

For general enquiries:

Ellen Broad
Manager, Digital Projects & Policy (IFLA)
Ellen.broad@ifla.org
+31622749588

For comment on EIFL and copyright:

Teresa Hackett
EIFL-IP Programme Manager
teresa.hackett@eifl.net