

Organisations representing library associations, library consortia, and professional librarians in over 150 countries urge WIPO Member States to agree an effective treaty for print disabled people.



We, the undersigned organisations representing over 750,000 professional librarians and serving over one billion registered library users worldwide, urge WIPO Member States to agree an effective treaty for print disabled people.



The library community has a direct interest in negotiations underway for the Diplomatic Conference in Marrakesh because libraries worldwide are one of the key agencies serving print disabled people, in particular in developing countries. As a profession, librarians enjoy a strong position of trust in the disability and rightsholder communities.



We affirm the right of print disabled people to access books, knowledge and cultural life on an equal basis as others, set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Libraries have long played an essential role in supporting this community by creating and building collections in alternative formats, often filling a gap due to the lack of accessible material.



We know that print disabled people have not benefited fully from new technologies because of copyright restrictions. In 1985 a joint WIPO-UNESCO report recommended a new international instrument which would permit production and distribution of accessible formats. Yet 28 years later, there is no legal instrument, nor effective commercial solutions. The current situation represents both a market failure and an international policy failure. Since it is unrealistic to expect that market gaps will be properly addressed in the near future, it is time for public policymakers to legislate.



The international library community therefore strongly supports the conclusion of an effective treaty for the benefit of print disabled people at the Diplomatic Conference in Marrakesh. By 'effective' we mean an international legal framework that print disabled people, and libraries that serve them, are confident will provide practical national legislative solutions. **An effective treaty:**



1. **Ensures efficient cross-border transfer of works:** it should not be hobbled by requirements for authorized entities to check “commercial availability” across borders, or to carry out unworkable “due diligence” procedures. Effective cross-border transfer of works stands to be one of the most important benefits of a treaty.
2. **Upholds the right to read for the world’s print disabled people – regardless of format:** copyright exceptions for print disabled people must be protected against override by technological protection measures. This is crucial in the digital age. The right to



read is fundamental – it should not be restricted by technological protection measures.

3. **Recognises the role of libraries in providing access to accessible format works:** libraries are well qualified to make accessible copies of works for print disabled people in compliance with agreed standards, efficiently, and without added expense and bureaucracy. An effective treaty would make clear in the Agreed Statement to the definition of “Authorised Entities” that serving print disabled readers is one of the primary activities of all libraries. While there are specialist libraries for print disabled people, *all* libraries have a mandate to serve all of their user communities equally, whether they be public, school, academic or workplace libraries.
4. **Promotes the public interest as central to the balance in copyright law** – the three-step test in international law is intended to balance the rights of creators alongside the public interest in access to works. A treaty for print disabled people must not be used to expand the reach of the three step test.

We believe that the request of the World Blind Union and its allies for an effective international treaty is right, fair, just and long overdue. In Marrakesh there is an opportunity to ensure that another generation of visually impaired persons and persons with print disabilities is not deprived of the right to read. We only need the political will to make it succeed.

Representatives from IFLA, EIFL and LCA are at the disposal of distinguished delegates during the Diplomatic Conference in Marrakesh to provide further information on library services to the print disabled community.

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Signatory organisations

The **International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)** is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to enabling access to knowledge through libraries in more than 60 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

The **Library Copyright Alliance (LCA)** consists of three major library associations — the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Association of College and Research Libraries. It addresses copyright issues that affect libraries and their patrons.

The **Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL)** is an independent association of chief executives of national libraries, established to facilitate discussion and promote understanding and cooperation on matters of common interest to national libraries worldwide.

The **International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC)** is an informal, self-organized group currently comprising approximately 200 library consortia in North and South America, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa.

The **Conference of European National Librarians (CENL)** aims to increase and reinforce the role of national libraries in Europe, in particular in respect of their responsibilities for maintaining the national cultural heritage and ensuring the accessibility of knowledge in that field.

The **Special Libraries Association (SLA)** is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves about 9,000 members in 75 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic, and government information specialists.

The **African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA)** is an independent, international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, which pursues the interests of library and information associations and services, librarians and information workers and the communities they serve in Africa.

The **European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA)** is an independent umbrella association of library, information, documentation and archive associations and institutions in Europe.

Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche - Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER) is the main network for research libraries in Europe. Its members include more than 400 national, university and other libraries from more than 40 countries.

Europeana is a catalyst for change in the world of cultural heritage. The **Europeana Foundation** and its network create new ways for people to engage with their cultural history, whether it's for work, learning or pleasure.

The **National Library of the Philippines (NLP)**, mandated to preserve, conserve and provide access to printed cultural heritage, aims to be in the forefront of library services throughout the country in upholding the librarianship profession.

The **American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)** was founded in 1906 to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information. Today, with over 5,000 members, the Association represents law librarians and related professionals who are affiliated with a

wide range of institutions: law firms; law schools; corporate legal departments; courts; and local, state and federal government agencies.

The **Canadian Library Association (CLA)** is the national voice for Canada's library communities; it promotes intellectual freedom, diversity, transparency and open communication, accountability, universal access to library service, member voices and contributions, collaboration.

The **Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)** is the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. We provide practical support for members throughout their careers and speak out on behalf of the profession.

The **Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH)** is the centre of excellence in providing recorded knowledge in all formats, for teaching, learning and research activities in Ghana.

The **Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance (LACA)** It brings together the UK's major professional organisations and experts representing librarians and archivists to advocate a fair and balanced copyright regime.

The **Uruguayan Library Association (ABU)** has the primary purposes of representation, promotion and protection of the professional interests of libraries.

The **Austrian Library Association (BVÖ)** represents the interests of public libraries and offers advice and information regarding professional library matters to its 2600 member libraries.

The **Austrian Librarian Association (VÖB)** represents the professional interests of librarians in Austria.

The **Danish Library Association (DLA)** is an organisation which lobbies for libraries, in particular public libraries. Its mission is to campaign for free and equal access to information, knowledge and cultural experiences at local level.

The **Indian Association of Special Libraries & Information Centres (IASLIC)** is a non-profit national, professional body to undertake, support and co-ordinate research and studies of its member libraries.

The **Croatian Library Association (HKD)** devotes its activities to further its purpose of protection and development of the profession of librarianship.

The **German Library Association (dbv)** is the professional body representing all German libraries and uniting them as equal partners. The dbv cooperates with numerous national and international committees and organisations on behalf of the about 2000 members. The German Library Association exists to promote German libraries.

The **Medical Library Association (MLA)** provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

The **Berufsverband Information Bibliothek (BIB)** joins together employees of libraries in Germany and helps to further information professionals' knowledge.

The **Ghana Library Association (GLA)** is the professional association of librarians, information and knowledge workers in Ghana.

The **Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA)** is the vibrant, vital professional voice for those engaged in Librarianship and Information management.

The **Netherlands Public Library Association** promotes (Inter)national representation, information exchange and adaption of reading for the blind and visually impaired.

The **FOBID Netherlands Library Forum** is the national association of the national library organizations.

The **Upplýsing: The Icelandic Library and Information Science Association** strengthens cooperation amongst libraries and the professionals working in the information field, encourages the development of Icelandic libraries, and works for the recognition of the importance of the services of libraries and information centers within the Icelandic society.

The **Danish Association of managers of Public Libraries** takes interest in the development of librarianship, procuring education and in-service training.

The **Spanish Federation of Societies of Archivist, Librarians, Documentalist and Museology (FESABID)** promotes and implements activities related with libraries, documentation centers, archives and museums.

The **Lebanese Library Association (LLA)** provides leadership for the development, promotion and enhancement of the library and information sector in order to ensure quality services to the Lebanese community.

The **Association of Hungarian Librarians (MKE)** assists the shaping and implementation of national library and information policy in Hungary.

The **Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)** is the national professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector.

The **Ukrainian Library Association** strives to be the chief advocate for the people of Ukraine to achieve and maintain high-quality library and information services.

The **Africa Library and Information Association and Institutions (AfLIA)** is the trusted African voice for the library and information community, and drives equitable access to information and knowledge for all.