

Previous	Next	Previous	Next	Previous	Next	Previous	Back	Join or	Reply	Post a	Search	Propor	Non-
----------	------	----------	------	----------	------	----------	------	---------	-------	--------	--------	--------	------

**Date:** Thu, 12 Apr 2001 18:21:18 +0200  
**Reply-To:** Centri di Documentazione Europea <CDE-IT@LIST.CINECA.IT>, "Elisabetta Pilia CSB Univ. Sassari" <epilia@ssmain.uniss.it>  
**Sender:** CDE-IT@LIST.CINECA.IT  
**From:** <http://list.cineca.it/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0104&L=cde-it&D=0&X=6968C3314D4E740A40&Y=tiziana.dassi@unibocconi.it&P=2525>  
**Subject:** Minutes 3rd ann. meeting nat. co-ordinators, Alghero, 2001-03-05/06  
**Comments:** cc: CID@polito.it  
**Content-type:** TEXT/PLAIN

Minutes of the

Third annual meeting of national co-ordinators of European Documentation Centres (EDCs), Alghero (Sardinia), 5-6 March 2001

--- Programme

--- Opening address by Professor Paolo Fois

Paolo Fois explained his personal involvement in the creation of the EDC in Sassari as an expert in international law and an ex-official of the European Commission. He sees EDCs as crucial in the creation of an information society, both to businesses and to citizens, who cannot be involved without full awareness of the decision-making process. He also suggested that EDCs could play a greater role in co-ordinating research on important debates, such as enlargement and the integration of European and national law.

--- Presentation on the history of European Documentation Centres by Isabel Loff

European Documentation Centres were established in 1963 with the aim of supporting teaching and research at university level in European integration. At the same time, European Reference Centres were created,

with limited documentation (most of these have now been upgraded to EDCs or Euro Info Centres) together with Depository Libraries, based either in national libraries or in parliaments (like Sweden and Finland: both Hungary and Bulgaria have asked the Commission for a similar arrangement).

Initially part of DG X (Universities Unit) contact with the academic world was emphasised. As new states joined the Community from 1973 onwards, the situation of EDCs was regularised: semi-private collections were ended and an insistence was made on open-access collections under the charge of professional librarians. Librarians have always been seen as pro-active in helping research, although the arrival of new technologies, such as Internet, CD-ROMs, etc. have placed more demands on them.

In 1994, EDCs were moved to the unit "Relays and Information Networks", showing the perceived need for EDCs to interact with the other official relays. The first training seminars took place in 1995 and the first exchange schemes in 1996 and 1997. The Commission's new policies began to be implemented in 1997 and relations between host institutions and the Commission were formalised in a Convention.

When the Commission was re-organised in 1999 EDCs became a unit within the new DG Education and Culture ("Libraries and EDCs") and appeared for the first time in the organisational chart. At this point the network of national co-ordinators was created and the training programme intensified.

The European Parliament's request for an information strategy with inter-institutional co-operation was accompanied by proposals for decentralisation and externalisation of services, ideas which now appear to have been shelved. EDCs moved back to the Press Division in early 2001 and there is at present no head of unit.

(This replaced the advertised speech by Mrs Ylva Tiveus of the Press and Communication Service on the Policy of the Commission and its consequences for EDCs. Mrs Tiveus has now moved to DG Environment).

--- Introduction to topics for discussion (Isabel Loff)

The 1998-2000 evaluation was now complete. While the activity report was still considered important other indicators were needed for a proper evaluation. Once the Vade-mecum had been decided, a new Convention should be established. Proposals for co-operative projects with other networks and Centres of Excellence needed to be considered. Paolo Fois asked how relations between EDCs and academics could be improved so that information needs and strategies were better matched.

--- Reports from standing working groups

Reports presented by the representatives of the working groups set up at the last co-ordinators' meeting held in Athens on the 10th and 11th April 2000.

-- National reports on EDCs (Georg Winter (A))

Because of ambiguities in some questions, a new procedure needed to be set out:

Each EDC should send an annual report to the Commission.

The national co-ordinator should establish a draft annual report on the basis of these and send to the EDCs for checking.

After checking, the national report should be prepared by the co-ordinator and

Posted to the network of co-ordinators, the Commission and the national network.

An e-mail list of all EDCs was needed, as were good will and co-operation, since a rapid response was required; if necessary, a warning from the Commission might ensure compliance. This should reinforce the idea of a unified network.

Statistical findings were presented by Angelika Grund [could be presented as an appendix].

## Depository libraries

Definitions vary and the convention does not apply to them. They should participate in the EDC network. Where national libraries do not make use of the material supplied, it should be transferred to a more useful location, such as the Parliament libraries on the Scandinavian model.

CD-ROM access to external users was recognised as a common problem.

## Accessibility of catalogues

The Dutch universities have a union catalogue on the Internet with the EDC collections integrated. There is a need to distinguish between access for staff and students.

## Staffing

Some EDCs in Germany and Austria are run by academics or postgraduates, not professional librarians as stated in the Convention, and have not signed the Convention; others have signed but not fully respected the Convention. The Commission has sent letters warning of closure to those EDCs that have not signed.

Evaluation does not take into account the imbalance between the expenses of the host institution and the material received.

## Problems:

Staff turnover creates a constant training problem. EDCs must be managed by a full-time professional member of staff but there is a need for experience to be shared to allow for continuity of service.

CD-ROMs often do not work on university networks and there are copyright problems if access is given to external users.

Official Journal: there is no solution in sight to the supply of the paper version. It was pointed out that the Celex and CD-ROM versions do not include annexes and tables.

Supply of material: there has been a considerable reduction in the material supplied, while some titles have been transferred to commercial producers or electronic versions, which cause a major archiving problem. Too many glossy publications are produced, where it would be better to have more serious information.

Cooperation is working well at all levels, through national meetings and both national and international mailing lists. Joint websites and catalogues are other examples of regional co-operation.

Communication needed to be improved between the EDCs and the Commission. Institutional changes and possible closures should be notified to the national coordinators. Before EDC status is awarded, an evaluation visit should be made by the Commission.

Ian Mayfield (UK) pointed out that full-time EDC staff were a luxury and expressed concern that restrictions of supply were part of a drive towards a paper-less Commission. Isabel Loff clarified the point that, where an EDC was not integrated in a university library, the full-time responsibility of a single member of staff was required; in fully integrated university libraries it was sufficient that a professional member of staff should be available on a full-time basis. Mrs Loff also pointed out that Eurostat had not yet provided paid-for access to databases and CD-ROMs for publications of the year 2000 for all EDCs. For 2002 access would be limited to 300 CD-ROMs for the entire network: national co-ordinators should establish which were eligible. The lack of communication was, in large part, due to a lack of definite information within the Commission itself. Concern was expressed that some official communications had reached the network through the Eurodoc mailing list, not through official channels.

--- Vade-mecum (Ian Mayfield (UK))

Drafts had been sent to all EDCs for comment via the national co-ordinators and the replies co-ordinated. The vade-mecum will be used as the basis for a new convention and possibly used as an annex to a more concise agreement. Attention was drawn to particular items in the vade-mecum:

- Uncertainty about the future situation of ED Cs.
  
- Training: was there a definite commitment to an ongoing programme of training?
  
- Co-ordination of the EDC network: if the central database was updated, why had the EDC website not been completed? [Isabel Loff replied that the updated website would be made publicly available as soon as possible]
  
- Distribution of "all publications" was a commitment in the present convention: this should be clarified. It was felt that the vade-mecum should at least require the Commission to consult before withdrawing supply of, e.g. the Official Journal. A formal request for EDCs to be represented on the interinstitutional publications committee should be made, as even a definite rejection would be informative.
  
- "Free access to public databases" only meant Celex at the moment, did not include, e.g. Ortelius. [IL replied that Ortelius had been discontinued]
  
- External activities promoting European integration was beyond the remit of many EDCs. [IL replied that was not an obligation]
  
- Staffing support from the host institution was actually far greater than the single member of staff required by the convention (cataloguers, IT staff, etc.).
  
- Accessibility: this could be rephrased as the EDC should "offer as much help as possible to outsiders without compromising the needs of the

host institution".

- Only one EDC in each city/region (point 3.7): should this apply retrospectively? [IL replied, no]

- Reproduction of documents: a clarification of the copyright position was needed.

- Full or specialised EDCs: a clarification of their entitlements should be included.

--- Evaluation report (Elisabetta Pilia (I))

There was a need to establish the basic tasks and responsibilities of EDC and Commission and to work out criteria for good management, based on statistical information, which could be used to measure performance objectively against stated aims. Statistical information was difficult to extract in integrated collections: the questionnaire needed to be simplified and ambiguous questions eliminated. Information requested in sections 2 (Opening times), 3 (Equipment), 4 (Information sources) and 5 (Human resources) could be analysed for statistical information and performance measurement. The evaluation report was one tool for establishing benchmarks; it was felt, however, that it would be easier to combine the evaluation and activity reports.

--- Distribution of publications / Development of Internet site (Wouter van Veenendaal (NL))

The group as originally set up had two tasks:

1. To send a letter to Commissioner Prodi about the ending of the free supply to EDCs of the Official Journal on paper. A letter had been sent, a draft of which was circulated to national co-ordinators beforehand. The reply was wrongly addressed, which meant it was some time before it reached the group. The reply was written not by Mr Prodi but by EUR-OP. It was an inadequate response to our concerns in that it emphasised the importance and need for continued improvement of information in electronic, rather than printed form.

2. To investigate the feasibility of a common home page for EDCs. Although a preliminary version of the homepage was not yet available, a Dutch EDC page had been set up and it was proposed to use this as a basis for future developments. Various technical questions needed to be addressed before a site was established: which server should be used; which language (English, for the experimental period, it was decided); should there still be national homepages and, if so, how should the two be linked?

A beta version of the site could probably be ready by November 2001, accessible initially only to the members of the working group and then released to national co-ordinators and the EDC network for approval before going "live".

--- Suggestion for discussion and establishment of new working groups

As set out in the agenda, after the existing working groups had made their reports a new set of working groups was organised, some of which continue the work of previous groups.

- Working group 1

Subject: Vade-mecum

Presentation of a new vade-mecum, taking into account the comments made by the previous group.

Development: Drafting of a new Convention, taking into account the vade-mecum.

Participants: Ian Mayfield (UK), spokesman, Riita Kairakari-Joss (S), Vassiliki Rigakou (GR), Leena Toivonen (FI).

- Working group 2

Subject: Continuation of work on a common web page for European EDCs

Participants: Wouter Marinus van Veenendaal (NL), spokesman Elvira Aleixandre Baeza (E), Mirelle Herlfterkamp (NL), Patrick Overy (UK), Helder da Rocha Machado (P), Kirsten Kruise (DK).

- Working group 3

Subject: Activity report (continuation and final report), evaluation questionnaire (new presentation)

Presentation of a new activity report, taking into account the conclusions of the previous report and points raised during the meeting.  
Development: Presentation of a new evaluation questionnaire.  
Participants: Elisabetta Pilia (I), spokesman, Maria da Saudade Miranda (P), John Goodwillie (IRL).

- Working group 4

Subject: Preparations for the next meeting of national coordinators  
Participants: Georg Winter (A) spokesman, Angelika Grund (D), Susanna Slama (A), Anna Bladh (S).

- Working group 5

Subject: Cooperation with other relays and networks  
Participants: Gunilla Häkli (FIN), spokesman, H el ene Galland (F), Kalina M uhlfeld (D), Sara Cavelli (I).

--- Vade-mecum (Ian Mayfield (UK))

The content had been re-examined in detail and a full rearrangement was proposed as follows. It was pointed out that some details conflicted with the evaluation questionnaire.

General. A clause should indicate the possible actions if an EDC failed to meet its obligations. The agreement should be signed both by the Head of the Institution and the Head of the Library.

1. Introduction

2. Responsibility for co-ordination: the role of the co-ordination service and of the national representatives. The co-ordination service should be the proper channel for communication between EDCs and the EU institutions, including the Publications Office.

3. Types of EDC (previous heading: Methods).

4. Distribution (to include Electronic access). The phrase "in theory" should be deleted before "receive all official publications". (The role

of the monthly résumé from EUR-OP in alerting networks to the availability of material from official sources was mentioned.)

5. Establishment of EDCs (previous heading: Attribution). The phrase "suitable space" could be replaced by "offering accommodation for the collection and readers and facilities for accessing information electronically".

6. Management of the collection: this should include a mention of cataloguing and could specify that the Commission only needed to be notified of the elimination of a "substantial amount of material".

7. Training: the basic and advanced seminars could be mentioned specifically here as a continuing commitment, together with the EDC Exchange Scheme.

8. Evaluation (the possibility of closure should be mentioned here).

Objectives should be expanded to state "and by giving support and advice in the use of information services".

--- EDC homepage (Wouter van Veenendaal (NL))

The main features (or chapters) on the homepage should be:

- an explanation of EDCs and the other official relays
- a directory of EDC addresses in all forms for each member state
- a union catalogue of serials, possibly with links to electronic versions
- subject access (perhaps using existing indexes like Europa Policies and SCADPlus)

- a teaching module, such as that of the University of Tilburg
- links with commentary to official and commercial EU databases
- selected non-EU websites, indexed and with descriptions

The editorial structure would probably be based on 2 EDCs, initially in the Netherlands. Before further progress could be made, an inventory meeting was required to establish the draft criteria and the working group requested the national co-ordinators to select the 2 or 3 best EDC sites in their countries so that the most useful features could be incorporated in the joint website. It was hoped that the work of the group could be continued through meetings arranged as part of the EDC exchange scheme. A beta version of the site could probably be ready by November 2001, accessible initially only to the members of the working group and then released to national coordinators and the EDC network for approval before going "live".

The following discussion established that the purpose of the homepage was not only to offer public access to the EDC network, but also to emphasise its value to the Commission and to researchers as a necessary complement to electronic sources of documentation.

--- Evaluation report / Questionnaire (Elisabetta Pilia (I))

The group agreed that it was important to define the aims of the evaluation process and to that end the form should be simplified, answers should be restricted to yes/no or statistical data, definitions should be included to eliminate ambiguities in some questions and the form should be co-ordinated with the minimum standards laid down in the coordination report, the vade-mecum and the convention translations should be provided in all Community languages forms should be typed for easier interpretation (or online/e-mail submission allowed).

The context questions could be simplified, e.g. figures for population and students of the target audience. The documentation questions are too detailed, particularly since all EDCs essentially receive the same

material. The options were either to remove this category or to specify what material from commercial publishers had been acquired for each EDC. [Mrs Loff emphasised the value to the Commission of knowing how much was published externally on the EU.] Since all official EU databases are accessible via Internet, this category was redundant or could be replaced by an estimate of which databases were most frequently used. An indication of the level of cataloguing and the accessibility of the catalogue (via Internet, as part of a joint catalogue or only on a local/standalone basis) would be valuable. Ian Mayfield felt that human resources with regard to an EDC were difficult to quantify, particularly where an EDC was fully integrated in a larger organisation and thought it might be preferable to estimate the number of man-hours devoted to the EDC per annum. Kalina Mühlfeld pointed out that ISO and IFLA standards both used "full-time equivalents" as a uniform measure and that this was what the group had chosen. The question of collaboration and cooperation with other networks was felt to be redundant if no space was allowed to detail the sort of co-operative ventures an EDC might be involved in.

--- Preparation for the next meeting (Georg Winter, Susanne Slama (A))

A proposal to be considered at the next meeting was a project for the exchange of information regarding research in progress. A scheme originally suggested by the EDC in Montpellier would allow EDCs to communicate the research interests of doctoral candidates using e-mail or Internet: a future EDC website could also be used for this purpose. It was hoped that the website would be ready in some form before the next meeting; it was also suggested that relations with applicant countries could be considered. Mrs Loff pointed out that the agenda of the next meeting, which is expected to be held in Vienna, would be established by the Commission.

--- Co-operation with other information networks and relays (Gunilla Häkli (FI))

The objective, that EDCs should cooperate with the other relays, was stated in the existing Vade-mecum. The list of relays include: EDCs, EICs, Info Points, Carrefours, Jean Monnet Chairs and Centres of Excellence, Representations and other, mainly national, networks. To collect information on this subject, it was proposed that a simple questionnaire should be sent out by March 31, for return by May 31, to collate data for the next meeting. The questionnaire would ask:

I. Co-operation with other relays Yes/No

II. What kind of co-operation

- Meetings
- Training for staff/users
- Joint actions and programmes (with comments and examples)

III. Future developments (as II above)

This action was seen as a way of strengthening the position of EDCs, improving professional skills and improving international co-operation. It was pointed out that Sources d'Europe in France brought together a directory of relay members and helped to co-ordinate regional Info Points [although Mrs Loff felt that this was too centralised and relied too much on the efforts of a single person]. The UK has already established an EU Information Network, which functions both as an online directory and as a regional forum for meetings and briefing sessions.

--- Other business - Isabel Loff (Commission)

Some of the applicant countries have already established national co-ordination committees and would like to participate in future meetings; Hungary, in particular, has expressed a desire to be present at the next annual meeting.

The EDC exchange scheme will take place again this year, organised as before by the European Information Association. Only 60 places are available and preference will be given to those who have not taken part in previous years. Candidate countries will also be eligible this year, mainly as visitors, as they may not have the resources to act as hosts: 10 places have been earmarked for them.

As Eurostat has only budgeted for 300 CD-ROMs of statistical publications in 2002, national co-ordinators should establish who should receive them in each country.

--- Closing speech by João Vale de Almeida (Director of Youth, Civil Society, Communication; DG for Education and Culture)

(read out in his absence by H el ene Galland)

The speech expressed his great interest in the work of EDCs and of the national co-ordinators and regretted that he could not be at Mrs Loff's last meeting. He spoke highly of her determination and energy and her involvement in the political movement which led to the end of dictatorship in Portugal and to Portugal's membership of the European Community and also called her the "leading ambassador for EDCs".

--- Closing remarks from Isabel Loff

Her aim had been to empower librarians by insisting that EDCs should be integrated in university libraries. She saw EDC librarians as the interface between researchers and sources of information in all media. The purpose of the co-ordinators meetings, which were her creation, was to reinforce the sense of common purpose. Her sadness at retiring was mixed with a feeling that EDCs now had the tools to continue as a valuable professional network, namely the contract, the prospect of a common website and the network of co-ordinators.

--- [Riedito e inoltrato a cura della segreteria tecnica AIB-CUR e CDE-IT]

Received: from ssmain.uniss.it by polito.it (PMDF V5.2-27 #3020)  
with ESMTP id <01K2BBQ8S8LS8XGLF9@polito.it> for CID@polito.it  
(ORCPT rfc822;CID@polito.it); Thu, 12 Apr 2001 13:43:27 +0200  
Date: Thu, 12 Apr 2001 13:53:50 +0200  
From: "Elisabetta Pilia CSB Univ. Sassari" <epilia@ssmain.uniss.it>  
To: Eugenio Gatto <CID@polito.it>

---

Back to: [Top of message](#) | [Previous page](#) | [Main CDE-IT page](#)

---

Back to the [LISTSERV home page at LIST.CINECA.IT.](#)

[CataList - online list search](#)

[Powered by LISTSERV\(R\)](#)