



13 April 2016

Dear Sir,

It was a great shame that Hachette Livre CEO Arnaud Nourry chose to target libraries at the International Publishers' Congress this week, as reported in [The Bookseller](#) and [Publishers Weekly](#). In particular, we, the library community, reject entirely the argument that we are proxies for the commercial sector. If libraries are for profit, it is for the profit of human development.

Libraries have a proud tradition of independence. We are there to protect and promote the interests of our users – citizens, creators, students – rather than shareholders.

Moreover, libraries are specifically designated worldwide as institutions necessary for serving the global public interest for a non-commercial purpose, as we have already stated many times at WIPO and elsewhere. We go about our work for no direct or indirect economic gain.

Libraries support a balanced copyright system where everyone has access to information and creativity, and authors are fairly rewarded. Authors themselves regularly underline their own support for libraries as places to research, raise awareness of their work, and build a reading culture. It goes without saying that publishers benefit from the vibrant creative economy that we nurture, as well as the billions spent by libraries every year on their output.

Indeed, we have long argued that what holds libraries and their users back in this regard is rather the tangled and opaque web of laws, contracts and licenses that prevails today. Where exceptions and limitations exist, they are restricted and often overridden by contract terms or other means. And even when this does not happen, uneven application hinders access to information across borders.

It is for that reason that we are calling for limited reforms which will strengthen the legal base on which libraries operate, both within our local communities and, increasingly, globally. Librarians are trained professionals and careful in respecting the law. To fulfil their missions at a national, European and international level, they need a core of basic enforceable exceptions and limitations, suited to the digital age and the opportunities this creates. This would hardly represent the 'vast exceptions' Mr Nourry cites.

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We look forward to working further in partnership with publishers, the European Commission, WIPO and its member states to achieve this. If we do, as Mr Nourry himself hopes, the best may well still be yet to come.

Yours faithfully,

Donna Scheeder, President, IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)

Jukka Relander, President, EBLIDA (European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations)

Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen, President, LIBER (Association of European Research Libraries)

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