



EIRE - IRELAND



#europe4libraries2019

Responses:

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Fine Gael – Deirdre Clune

In the European parliament, I have been a member of the MEP Library Lovers Group, which brings together Members of the European Parliament from around the EU, and across the political spectrum, who are passionate about libraries

During this time, we have strongly advocated for libraries that serve people of every age, education level, income level, ethnicity and physical ability. It is my view that libraries can help provide resources that many people could otherwise not have access to and that many of these resources are vital for living, working and participating in our societies.

Over the past five years, social inclusion has been a key EU priority and we have made some amazing progress in this regard, of which we can be proud, but we must not forget that digital inclusion is also important. We can all recognise the value of the traditional and cultural services offered by our libraries but if we want to ensure that they can continue to provide opportunities, house our knowledge and culture and represent many of our most basic freedoms - then our libraries must also become fit for the digital age.

Already over the past mandate we have raised the importance of libraries to developing new skills such as coding, and to increasing the inclusivity of their communities. We have supported initiatives that aims to provide librarians with the tools they need to take on the digital revolution and hosted events in the Parliament outlining the need for more support and investment in our libraries.

Over the next five years, we must work hard to make sure we do not overlook the huge potential of libraries to contribute to policies in the Digital Single Market. Our aim is to create a digital single market where the free movement of goods, persons, services, capital and data is guaranteed - and where citizens and businesses can seamlessly and fairly access online goods and services, whatever their nationality, and wherever they live. In my view, we must take responsibility for literacy in the digital future. I believe that our libraries have a role to play in this. About 2 million EU citizens go to their library because it is the only place that they can access free internet, for them, their library is a crucial link to our ongoing digital revolution.

The future of work is one of the defining challenges of our time and we need to adapt our labour laws and social security services, upgrade the skills of our people and sufficiently support all actions we take in this area. The demand for e-skills is increasing drastically. It is estimated that approximately 90% of jobs require basic computer skills and yet nearly 50% of the EU population have little or no internet skills. In Ireland, only 6% of adults take part in life-long learning activities



while over 30% of Irish companies have said they find it difficult to find people with the right skills.

To ensure that our libraries are open to all, can cater to the skills development we need, can grow alongside those needs and support many of our other, wider, ambitions - we need advocates such as the MEP library group - who recognise the vital role to be played by our libraries when we are creating policy and new, EU-wide, legislation so that we don't underestimate the role libraries can play and so that we can advocate for the support that they need.



Greens – Ciaran Cuffe

1. How will you ensure that Europe enables its libraries to offer everyone access to the information they need, in particular as concerns education, employment, health and democratic participation?

By ensuring services are accessible to all regardless of abilities. This includes ensuring universal access, using social media, and reaching out to those for whom English is not their mother tongue.

2. How will you ensure that Europe's libraries provide opportunities for all, throughout their lives, to learn and develop relevant skills in the digital age?

By ensuring that the Union adequately finances culture and education, and by working with Member States to ensure that all have access to library services, even in hard-to-reach places and groups.

3. How will you ensure that Europe and its libraries lead the world when it comes to Open Science, including achieving its goal of making all publicly-funded research openly available by 2020?

There is scope to work with Horizon2020 and its success to ensure a close link is made between research, education and libraries. Future research programmes must emphasise open publication of results.

4. How will you ensure that Europe's documentary heritage, as held in libraries, is accessible to all, regardless of income, disability or other factors, now and in the future?

There is great scope to make close links between the EU, UNESCO, UCOMOS and other cultural and heritage organisations to ensure information is made publicly available.

5. How will you ensure that Europe realises the potential of its libraries as factors of success in a comprehensive strategy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?

Well-resources libraries are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals. Quality education (SDG4) can be optimised through libraries that reach out to groups who may not have education through other means.

6. How will you ensure that Europe's action in the wider world supports, both through development funding and international law, libraries and access to information?

Overseas aid traditionally was based on an economic development model. We now realise that education, culture and education are as important as economic well-being. To that end, the support of the EU for better libraries dovetails perfectly with the realisation of development that is truly sustainable.



Independents4Change – Clare Daly

We'd certainly be keen to ensure that libraries are properly funded, with dedicated funding through EU funding programmes. Given the effects of austerity across the continent on library funding it would be particularly important that ringfenced EU funding be available to offset the decline in national funding (as well as supporting library projects aimed at literacy, digital skills and so on). Obviously the Multiannual Financial Framework won't be finally nailed down until next autumn, so the discussions and negotiations around that would be the time to push for those kinds of resources to be made available.

When it comes to Open Science, we'd be hugely in favour of moves to ensure that publicly-funded research is freely available - the current system of enormously expensive (and enormously lucrative) scientific publishing is an absolute travesty. Research is nothing if it is not free to be built upon. Given the cross-border nature of both research and publishing the European Parliament could play an important role in keeping the pressure on for open access in the wake of the Commission's 2018 recommendation. Presumably the discussions around Horizon2020 as part of the 2021-2027 MFF could be one arena in which that kind of pressure could be put on, although obviously open access goes wider than that.

[...] We'll certainly do what we can to ensure that libraries, and access to information more broadly, are given the priority they deserve if [I am] elected to Europe.