



Statement of support from EBLIDA to American Libraries Association (ALA)

In this time of increasing attacks and challenges to your mission, it is more important than ever to reaffirm the values that libraries represent: they are pillars of democracy in our societies. EBLIDA stands in solidarity with the ALA and fully supports its unwavering commitment to the power of critical thinking and to fostering inclusive, informed communities.

EBLIDA is extremely concerned by recent decisions in the United States concerning funding cuts for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), as well as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the wider heritage sector, as well as the withdrawal of datasets and halting of research. We echo the position of the American Library Association in disapproving the cuts announced to IMLS, which plays such a valuable role in supporting libraries. The cuts will not just hurt the employees of IMLS, but the millions who rely on libraries to enjoy their rights and fulfil their potential, including services to children and early reading initiatives. This can irreversibly affect the formation of a knowledge society, the civic participation of the future generation, and the ability to think and reason critically. The same can be said of The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). As has already been underlined by the Association of Research Libraries, cuts here can have very real impacts on people's lives in the short term. Yet the true societal cost is likely only to be fully felt in the long term, as transparency, accountability, and democratic participation suffer.

A nation where the people have no access to information on their past stumbles blindly into the future. In addition, restrictions on the freedom to pursue collaborative scientific research are an attack on the future. Beyond the human cost of hard work disrupted or cancelled, it also narrows the range of material that will be available to future researchers. Thus, endangering the chances of essential breakthroughs on topics such as society, environment, technology, and health. Beyond the immediate negative impacts on American colleagues and citizens, these steps have global consequences.



The United States is a key hub in the global knowledge ecosystem and has also long been an enabler of access to information internationally. US influence has helped to build more inclusive and prosperous societies in many parts of the world; therefore, recent policy reversals merit worldwide attention. EBLIDA supports American colleagues facing these challenges and upholding the values and missions of libraries. We welcome efforts to safeguard freedom of research to ensure ongoing accessibility, and diligence in tracking and evaluating the impacts of these changes. We are very distressed by the threats to many of the libraries and librarians in the United States.

We strongly express our disapproval of such assaults on your institutions and individual employees. We will encourage the members of EBLIDA to take action on a national or local level to strengthen our support for your case.

Approved by the EBLIDA Executive Committee