

SUNICOP



Working paper

SUNICOP 10/2012

Presented in Osijek, Croatia

**Contemporary legal challenges:
EU – Hungary – Croatia**

16-18 February 2012

This working paper is the draft version of the paper presented in the Conference.

Suggested reference of the working paper:

Eszter Karoliny – Tunjica Petrašević – Ljiljana Siber: Providing EU information in libraries – experiences from member states and candidate countries. Working paper, SUNICOP 10/2012, <http://sunicop.eunicop.eu/publications.html>

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PROVIDING EU INFORMATION IN LIBRARIES – EXPERIENCES FROM MEMBER STATES AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

I. Introduction: Access to Information and Libraries in the 21st Century

1. Access to Information

The 20th century – among many other developments in human rights – brought about the widespread recognition of various “information” rights: the right to privacy, on one hand, and the right of accessing public information, on the other. These rights have been recognised in national legislation as well as international treaties, such as the European Convention on Human Rights:

“Article 10 – Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. **This right shall include freedom** to hold opinions and **to receive and impart information** and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises”. The European Union also has imposed on its institutions an obligation to function as openly as possible, giving citizens and residents of the Member States a right of access to documents:

“Article 15

1. In order to promote good governance and ensure the participation of civil society, the Union’s institutions, bodies, offices and agencies shall conduct their work as openly as possible. [...]

3. Any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have a right of access to documents of the Union’s institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, whatever their medium, subject to the principles and the conditions to be defined in accordance with this paragraph”. The above-mentioned information rights are served by the active provision of information by states and international organisations via official publications, government websites etc. as well as the “passive” side of having a mechanism to answer queries from citizens. In addition to providing the base minimum of information proscribed in laws, modern states and organisations also try to hand out information on their structure and policies in all available forms to reach the widest possible audience, using every media type and communication technology available.

2. The Role of Libraries

Libraries have provided documents and information, as well as access to information, as one of their fundamental functions, from the beginnings of their existence. Since the establishment of the public library model, this mission statement has included the widest possible audience, that is, giving information to all the people. “For the library and information professions no

value is more fundamental than a commitment to providing the people with access to information”.¹

This ultimate role of libraries has been recognised in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)'s Guidelines for Public Libraries: “The primary purposes of the public library are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. [...] It is a basic human right to be able to have access to and an understanding of information, and there is now more information available than ever before in the world's history. As a public service open to all, the public library has a key role in collecting, organising and exploiting information, as well as providing access to a wide range of information resources. In providing a wide range of information the public library assists the community in informed debate and decision making on key issues.”² EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, which is an independent, non-profit umbrella organisation of national library, archive and information sectors associations and institutions in Europe, also established in its mission statement “unhindered access to information in the digital age and the role of archives and libraries in achieving this goal.”³ There remains little doubt that libraries are widely considered to be a uniquely suited tool to aid access to information. This principle is known and made use of by the European Union, whose information policy we will discuss in the next chapter.

II. European Union and Information: Information and Communication Policy of the EU

1. The Past and the Present of Information Policy

The first point to be made when talking about the European Union's information policy is that the European institutions, especially the European Commission, have since their earliest incarnations provided information on the functioning and activities of the Communities and later the Union. Parallel to this, both the Commission and the Parliament have semi-regularly issued documents that were usually aimed at creating a coherent approach to these information activities. (The same can be said of communication, or more precisely, the possibilities available for the European citizens to directly influence EU policy.) None of the documents, however, dealt with the use of the complete array of existing information / communication tools. In this article, we will mention both some of the most important tools for and documents about the information / communication policy, in a chronological order of appearance. The information policy documents (Commission communications, EP resolutions) published in the first decades of integration were treating the policy as more of an administrative issue than one of high politics: they were mostly annual public relations plans or strategies for activating the citizens to participate in the European Parliament elections. The information policy documents, however, gained more weight as the “democratic deficit” crisis hit in the late 1980s, and at the referendums on the Maastricht Treaty it became apparent that the European citizens no longer accepted the functioning of the EU without very serious doubts. As the new millennium began, the main problem turned from a lack of information to a lack of communication: beside easily understandable and readily available information on EU activities, the citizens also wanted to have a real chance at influencing EU policy. In lieu of this, they expressed their opinion in referendums, the most notable of which were the French and Dutch votes on the Constitutional Treaty. The year of 2005 was a turning point in the development of the European Communication Policy, but this does not mean that no

¹ B. J. Turocka, G. W. Friedrich, 'Access in a Digital Age' in M. J. Bates M. N. Maack, eds., *Encyclopedia of library and information science* (Boca Raton : CRC Press, 2010) p. 23.

² <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/gpl.htm#2> (2011.12.27.)

³ <http://www.eblida.org/> (2011.12.27.)

actions were taken before. The European institutions, especially the European Commission, were well aware that more needed to be done in this field ever since 1992, and issued several documents to alleviate the problems⁴. In this era, the significant “access to documents” legislation⁵ and case-law have also been developed. After the Constitutional Treaty referendums and in a response to the period of reflection declared by the European Council the Commission re-evaluated its communication activities and put forward three documents to create a new framework in which the people of Europe would be able to get pertinent information about the EU and express their opinions in connection with it. The first of these documents was the Action Plan to improve communicating Europe⁶, which was issued by the Commission to summarise the measures to be taken inside the Commission, to “put its house in order”. The second document issued was Plan D⁷, aiming at “stimulating a wider debate” between the institutions and the citizens. Although prompted by the need of deciding the fate of the Constitutional Treaty, its main purpose is to be able to define Europe based on the expectations and needs of citizens; this naturally means that it is not restricted to the period of reflection: the Plan D gives a foundation for a long-term consultative method of operation. This method is based on the assumption that European citizens would like to have their voice heard by the institutions, and that forums are needed for them to express their views. These forums, in all Member States, would provide a place for “broad ranging national debates on the future of Europe”. Although assistance was provided by the Commission and the European Parliament, through Representations and Offices respectively, the responsibility of organising the debates was on the Member States; this was augmented by 13 Community-level initiatives. Plan D involved a feedback process from Member States: the first stage of this ended in April, 2006. Two documents were drafted on basis of the feedback results: the first was a Citizens’ Agenda⁸, summarising the Commissions’ proposals and commitments to a “Europe of results”, which should respond to the citizens’ needs and expectations. The other document adopted by the Commission on the basis of the first feedback from Plan D national debates was the Communication from the Commission to the European Council on the Period of reflection and Plan D⁹. As follows from its title, this document is more closely concerned with the outcome of the reflection period and the results of national forums organised. In 2007, the period of reflection came to an end; instead of the Constitutional Treaty, a Reform Treaty was drafted, and the ratification process begun anew. Reflecting the passing of the stage which has given birth to Plan D, the Commission adopted a document that evaluated this initiative, but also proposed a continuing process, especially with regard to the Lisbon ratification and the European Parliament elections in 2009¹⁰. The continuing initiative, dubbed Debate Europe after the Plan D discussion website, will concentrate on the 3rd D, democracy, by conducting citizens’ consultations and debates with politicians about the position papers prepared at the consultations. It also focuses on promoting active citizenship (here cooperation with all European institutions is essential), taking into account all already existing

⁴ Information, communication, openness. Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1994; A new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union COM(2001)354; An information and communication strategy for the European Union COM(2002) 350; Implementing the Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union COM(2004)0196 and European Parliament resolution on the implementation of the European Union’s information and communication strategy (2004/2238(INI))

⁵ Regulation 1049/2001/EC

⁶ Action Plan to improve Communication Europe by the Commission: SEC(2005)985

⁷ Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate: the Commission’s contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: COM(2005)494

⁸ A Citizen’s Agenda: Delivering Results for Europe: COM(2006)211

⁹ The Period of Reflection and Plan D: COM(2006)212

¹⁰ Debate Europe – building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate: COM(2008)158

programmes to this end. The third of the original three documents introduced by the European Commission, the White Paper a European Communication Policy¹¹, adopted on 1st February 2006, launched a consultation on the introduction of a new communication policy for the EU. This would stem from the dual principles that every European citizen, regardless of nationality, social or educational background or any other defining factor, has a right to both receiving “fair and full information” about the European Union, and, in return, to be heard by the EU institutions, when he or she wishes to express his/her opinions. Beside establishing these rights for the individuals, the White Paper also suggests building a “European public sphere” to ensure that EU-related topics have a pan-European forum of their own, where they can be discussed. The document identified five areas for action in relation to establishing the new policy: developing the principles of communication, empowering citizens, better media connections, better use of Eurobarometer surveys and more cooperation. The first tangible effects of the efforts to find a solution were presented to the public in October 2007, albeit in a provisional form, by the Commission. The several documents made public at this time were based on the results from the consultation process described in the White Paper on the European Communication Policy, and the findings of two Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2006 on the communication policy preferences and habits of citizens¹² and decision makers¹³ of the EU. The European Commission issued a document on Communicating Europe in Partnership¹⁴, a proposal for an Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA)¹⁵ on the same topic, plus the impact assessment documents¹⁶ attached to these two on the 3rd of October 2007. In these the Commission outlined its new proposal for a communication policy, emphasized the importance of the coherent and integrated approach to communication ; pointed out the necessity of empowering citizens so they would be able to participate in the EU discussions. It also put forward new ideas to aid the development of a European public sphere, such as involving politicians and journalists in internet discussions and meetings (Pilot Information Networks), re-designing the EUROPA portal, and placing more weight on public opinion surveys. Finally, the Communication, in addition to proposing the IIA (thus working together with other institutions), also mentions forms of cooperation (e.g. management partnerships) with Member State governments. The draft IIA text contained the enshrinement of the objectives (taken from the White Paper) of giving everyone “access to fair and diverse information about the European Union” and enabling “everyone to exercise their right to express their views and to participate actively in the public debate on European issues”. It recognises and details the tasks and duties of the (already existing) Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI), lays down the procedure of adopting a common annual work plan, and the actions to make real the principle of going local. Finally, the IIA establishes monitoring, assessment and review procedures. These proposals were soon followed by communications from the Commission on the better use of the Internet¹⁷ (while recognising the importance of the Internet, this mostly details the reform of the EUROPA webportal) and audiovisual media¹⁸ (use of the existing and possibility of new television and radio networks) in addressing citizens. These strategies are significant in allowing for the use of the most available and democratic, also most popular information sources in Europe. The

¹¹ White Paper on a European Communication Policy: COM(2006)35

¹² Flash Eurobarometer 189a EU Communication and the citizens. General Public Survey 2006

¹³ Flash Eurobarometer 189b EU Communication and the citizens. Decision Makers 2006

¹⁴ Communicating Europe in Partnership COM (2007) 568

¹⁵ Proposal for an Inter-Institutional Agreement on Communicating Europe in Partnership COM (2007) 569

¹⁶ Accompanying document to the Communication Communicating Europe in Partnership Impact Assessment SEC (2007) 1265

¹⁷ Communicating about Europe via the Internet. Engaging the citizens: SEC (2007)1742

¹⁸ Communicating Europe through audiovisual media SEC(2008)506/2

draft IIA put forward in 2007 was adopted almost a year later, in 2008, in the form of a political declaration¹⁹ of the Commission, the Parliament and the Council, with softer language, no reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and no details on the tasks of the Interinstitutional Group on Information. This document is now the legal basis of the cooperation of the three institutions on information provision.

2. Information Networks and Relays

In all Member States and, in the case of larger countries, significant regions, the European Commission operates Representations, which fulfil the role approximating to that of a foreign embassy. (This role is even more pronounced in the case of Delegations functioning in third countries.) The European Parliament also has established a network of information offices (altogether 34)²⁰. The role of the Representations includes provision of information on the national or regional level, in various forms and methods (press contacts, organisation of events, publishing, etc.) but experience shows that information is required – and best provided – locally. For various purposes, therefore, several information networks were established by the European Commission in general and various DGs in particular. The first, in 1963, was the European Documentation Centres network, aimed at providing information and resources to research and education conducted at universities. Other general networks include Team Europe, consisting of expert speakers, and the Europe Direct relay, which developed from Info Points Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, but also includes a toll-free telephone and e-mail answer service, and has the goal of informing the general public. Specialised networks and relays are almost impossible to list, especially because in addition to the ones founded by the DGs, several Member States established their own with or without aid from the EU. These are almost always related to a certain policy of the EU and endeavour to ensure that European citizens have access to all their rights stemming from Community legislation. Most networks and relays receive support from the Commission in being supplied with publications, opportunities for training and sometimes direct financial assistance. In addition to and independently from all the networks and relays, European Union information can be found in libraries all over Europe.

III. Information Networks and Relays in Hungary

1. Pre-Accession

In the 1990s and as Hungary was drawing closer and closer to the possibility and probability of EU membership, various information offices opened in Budapest and other cities and towns: both as members of the Europe-wide information networks and established specifically for Hungary by the government. In these years, up to 2004, one task for all these networks was to help in the preparation for membership, to familiarise people with the EU, and to promote opportunities already available.

a) European Documentation Centres

EDCs were the first information network established in Hungary: the Faculty of Law of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest hosted one since 1988. Up until the accession, 11 more were established, including the EU Depository Library in the Parliament Library. EDCs mainly focused on providing information to university and college faculty and students, helping in setting up EU-related curricula, and establishing the theoretical and empirical background for EU reference work in libraries.

b) European Information Points

¹⁹ Communicating Europe in Partnership *Official Journal C 13*, 20.1.2009, p. 3–4

²⁰ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/nearYou/completeList.do?language=EN> (2011.12.27.)

The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then responsible for accession negotiations, established in 2000-2001 a network of European Information Points to provide information to the general public. The plan was to have an EIP in all counties, where these could establish satellite offices. Financing was provided by the Ministry and the county councils.

c) EU Public Libraries

Also as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' public information programme, public libraries of Hungary were given an opportunity to apply to become members of the EU Public Libraries network in 2001. Selected libraries were, in return for financial support, expected to establish a visible special collection on EU affairs, provide reference services, also organise events on the topic for the local public.²¹ The initiative also included training for the librarians designated as responsible for the special collection.

d) Other Networks and Relays

In addition to the ones mentioned above, other, mostly specialised EU relays were established in Hungary in this period: the Team Europe, an Euro Info Centre, an Innovation Relay Centre and PHARE coordination / management offices, to name a few.²²

2. Post-Accession

Already existing information networks and relays generally continued to work after Hungary became a Member State in 2004. There was little doubt that EU information was more necessary than ever; experience gained in the years of preparation was still useful. Both EDCs and EU Public Libraries still operate, both networks having gained new members. European Information Points mostly became a part of the Europe Direct network in 2005. The Representation of the European Commission in Hungary manages, helps and coordinates the work of all EU information providers, by providing opportunities for contact, learning and networking.

IV. Information Networks and Relays in Croatia

1. Accession of Croatia to the European Union

International recognition of the Republic of Croatia as an independent and sovereign state on 15th January 1992 also resulted in the establishment of relations with the European Union. Since then, these relations have developed gradually; they have been intensified after the year 2000 and through a series of steps they have led Croatia to the negotiations about its accession to the European Union. Through the contractual relation formed by the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, signed on 29th October 2001, Croatia has assumed the status of associate member and potential candidate for full membership in the EU. The request for full membership of Croatia was submitted in 2003. After the Council of Europe had entrusted the European Commission with the drafting of an opinion (avis) about the Croatian request, and after the Commission had given a positive opinion, in 2004 Croatia was given the official status of candidate for the membership in the EU. The negotiations officially started on 3rd October 2005 with phase one - the analysis of the coordination of the legislation of the Republic of Croatia with European regulations (so-called screening). The negotiations focused on the conditions under which Croatia will acquire, implement and perform the *acquis communautaire*²³. After six years of negotiations, the Republic of Croatia and the

²¹ http://www.mfa.gov.hu/kum/hu/bal/eu/eu_tajekoztato_szolgalat/EU_kozkonyvtari_program.htm (2011.12.27.)

²² Á. Koreny, 'Az EU információs és dokumentációs rendszere', *5 Európai tükkör* (2000) p 85 at p 87-90

²³ v. K. Brigljević et al., *Hrvatska na putu u Europsku uniju: od kandidature do članstva* [Croatia on its way to European Union: from candidacy to membership] (Zagreb, Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova Europskih

European Union have signed the Accession Treaty in Brussels on 9th December 2011. According to the Accession Treaty, the Republic of Croatia is supposed to become the 18th member of the European Union on 1st July 2013.

2. Providers of Information about the EU in Croatia

The making of such an important decision that concerns the further direction of development and the future of Croatia and its citizens, has already at the start of the negotiations raised the question of whether each citizen, following his constitutional right²⁴ of access to information in possession of the bodies of public authority, has been sufficiently informed about the advantages and disadvantages as well as about the rights and duties arising from the accession to the EU? The Stabilisation and Association Agreement has emphasized the importance and necessity of the development of an information network infrastructures on all levels of the society, so that the citizens may better understand all aspects of the accession to the EU. As a result, in October 2004 the Government of the Republic of Croatia has adopted its first Communication strategy for the informing of Croatian public about the accession of the Republic of Croatia to European integrations²⁵, thus having set the strategic guidelines for the informing of Croatian citizens about the European integration process. As the dynamics of approaching to the EU intensified, in 2006 the Croatian Government issued a new Communication strategy for the informing of Croatian public and preparations for membership²⁶. These documents will be discussed in this paper.

a) Project “Europe in Croatia – a Network of Euro Info Spots”²⁷

In 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European integrations initiated the project “Europe in Croatia – a Network of Euro Info Spots“. Euro info spots consist of an Internet kiosk and an information stand with information materials. They have been mainly set up in town libraries and county centres, as well as in other larger towns, in faculties and in other academic institutions. Their purpose is to inform the citizens about the EU and about the activities performed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the entry into the full EU membership, to provide better communication with citizens and to facilitate access to information and promote the Internet as the means of general communication. So far, as the result of the project, a strong and quality infrastructure of 105 Euro Info Spots have been created. This is in keeping with the general attitude of the Croatian Government that all citizens of Croatia are equal partners in the complex process of accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union that as such they have the right to be accurately and objectively informed about the course of the process itself.²⁸

b) The European Union Information Centre

integracija, 2008). v. also: Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova Europskih integracija [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations], accessible at: < www.mvep.hr>

²⁴ Art. 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, NN [Official Gazette] No. 85/10

²⁵ *Komunikacijska strategija za informiranje hrvatske javnosti o približavanju Republike Hrvatske europskim integracijama = Communication strategy aimed at informing the Croatian public about the European integration process of the Republic of Croatia*, ed, M. Pejčinović Burić, (Zagreb, Ministarstvo za europske integracije, 2002). Also available at: <http://www.mvpei.hr/ei/download/2002/06/11/Komunikacijska_strategija.pdf>

²⁶ *Komunikacijska strategija za informiranje hrvatske javnosti o Europskoj uniji i pripremama za članstvo = Communication strategy aimed at informing the Croatian public about the European Union and preparations for EU membership*, ed., M. Horvatić, (Zagreb, Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova i europskih integracija, 2006). Also available at:< http://www.mvpei.hr/ei/download/2006/08/31/Komunikacijska_strategija.pdf>

²⁷ <mei.multilink.hr/projekt-eu-r-full.html>, (accessed on 05.02.2012)

²⁸ Communication strategy, op. cit. note 26, p. 14

“The European Union Information Centre has been established by the Delegation of the European Commission in the Republic Of Croatia in order to ensure thorough facts-based informing of the Croatian public about the process of integration into the European Union.”²⁹ The aims of its foundation are to raise the understanding of and the knowledge about the European Union and its mechanisms in the Croatian public thus contributing the recognition and acceptance of the values on which the EU is based. There is a permanent event forum with the Delegation of the European Union in Croatia.³⁰

c) EU i - Documentation Centre at the Institute for International Relations³¹

EU Info - Documentation Centre at the Institute for International Relations in Zagreb has been working since 1991 and is the only one in the Republic of Croatia. The Commission of the EU establishes such centres in universities or research institutes to provide support for studying, teaching and conducting research work about European integrations. Centres are organized as information networks of European Commission and they are founded in member countries and beyond that. They provide all sorts of information about the EU, participate in the promotion of access to information and politics of the EU for the academic community and for the general public. “Following the Agreement about the EU i-Documentation Centre between the European Commission in the Republic of Croatia and the Institute for International Relations in 2008, the EU i – Documentation Centre becomes a part of the communication strategy of the European Commission Delegation and the European Documentation Centre which was under the jurisdiction of the European Commission General Administration for Communication Strategy has been transferred into the jurisdiction of the General Administration for Expansion.”[...] “On the occasion of the signing of the Agreement, Degert said that through the EU I-Documentation Centre the European Union intends to come closer to Croatian citizens and he emphasized that the Centre will allow direct access to more than 25,000 publications and 15,000 documents of the European Union. When Croatia becomes a member of the EU, EU I-Documentation Centre will join EUROPE DIRECT - the network of information providers that includes the EU information relays, European documentation centres and the EUROPE TEAM – a group of expert lecturers specialized for various topics about the EU.”³²The Centre publishes the bimonthly journal Euroscope and maintains and upgrades the portal EnterEurope³³. The Centre has at its disposal the complete EU legislature since 1952, which has been announced in the Official Journal of the European Union European Commission series L and C, COM documents, reports and opinions of the European Parliament’s Economic and Social Committee and the Regions etc.

d) Public Libraries

In a modern democratic society it is expected that information that the Government disposes of are transparent and publicly available. “The source of this understanding is found in the simple and logical assumption that the public authority, based on the modern conception of sovereignty of the nation understood as a political community of citizens, is nothing else but the performing of certain operations based on the mandate, and that, consequently, it is

²⁹ www.delhrv.ec.europa.eu/?long=hr&content=2850, (quoted on 05.02.2012)

³⁰ Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Croatia is a permanent diplomatic mission representing the executive body of the European Union – the European Commission. The Delegation has been established after the parliamentary elections in Croatia in March 2000 when it was decided to promote the Office of the Special Emissary to Delegation.

³¹ *Vodič kroz mjesta za informiranje o Europskoj uniji u Republici Hrvatskoj* [Guide through EU information spots in the Republic of Croatia] (Zagreb, Hrvatska gospodarska komora, 2005), p. 7.

³² <http://www.entereurope.hr/cpage.aspx?page=clanci.aspx&pageID=138clanakID=2658>, (quoted: 05.01.2012).

³³ Accessible at: < www.entereurope.hr >

precisely the citizens that have the right to be informed about the conduct of these operations.³⁴ On the basis of the above, in the execution of its Communication strategy the Government will “in communicating with the public cooperate with partners who have influence on the shaping of the public opinion: civil society organisations, economic and social institutions, bodies and associations as well as with other participants in the communication process. The list of the most important partners of the Government in the communication with citizens also includes libraries.³⁵ In early 2005 Croatian Librarian Society (HKD), supported by the National Foundation for the Development of the Civil Society, has started the three-year project *Information about the European Union in Public Libraries*. The project included the participation of 10 regional librarian societies covering the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia and of the Dutch Association of Public Libraries, which allowed the users of the program to exchange experiences about providing information and use the newly acquired knowledge in their own surroundings.³⁶ Thus the project was ab initio raised to international level. Harmonized with the procedure of Communication Strategy, the Program tried to realize several goals:

“- expanding the knowledge of librarians, as the “first lines“ of cultural and democratic development of the society in relation to the European Union and its information sources and contributing to the development of national libraries as information centres, in which the local community is being educated about European information and in which concrete information about the European Union are being offered about areas of special interest for particular regions of the Republic of Croatia [...]

- providing education that promotes intellectual initiative and high librarian standards and that prepares the users of national libraries for life and work in the community according to European standards,

- using the network of public libraries to foster the culture of inspiration, innovation and courage to work on changes aiming at life as partners in the European, multicultural family”³⁷

The Program has been carried out through 25 workshops organized in all counties with the following topics: human rights, freedom of expression and free information access, with special emphasis on the children’s right on information, the work of IFLA and EBLIDA, Directive of the Council of Europe about the library legislation and politics in Europe, the role of libraries in information society, cooperation of libraries with other public institutions and nongovernmental associations. Through practical work on the Internet the participants were instructed about the information politics and information networks, about official publications

³⁴ Đ. Gardašević, „Pravo na pristup informacijama u akademskoj zajednici“ [Right of access to information in the academic community] in A. Belan-Simić and A. Horvat, ed., *4. i 5. okrugli stol Slobodan pristup informacijama* [Fourth and Fifth round table: Free access to information] (Zagreb, Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2007), p. 1.

³⁵ S. Ramljak, et al., “Povezivanje narodnih knjižnica u virtualnu mrežu za informiranje o Europskoj uniji u Hrvatskoj» [The Connecting of public libraries into a virtual network for information about the European Union in Croatia], in A. Belan-Simić and A. Čar, ed., *Program Informacije o Europskoj uniji u narodnim knjižnicama: pregled provedbe programa 2005.-2007* [Program: Information about the European Union in public libraries: review of the realization of the program 2005-2007] (Zagreb, Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2007), p. 142.

³⁶ A. Čar, *Izvori informacija o Europskoj uniji* [Sources of information about the European Union] (Zagreb, Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2006), p. 5.

³⁷ Ž. Barišić – Schmeider and A. Belan-Simić “Program Informacije o Europskoj uniji u narodnim knjižnicama” [Programme of Information about the European Union in public libraries], in A. Belan-Simić and A. Čar, ed., *Program Informacije o Europskoj uniji u narodnim knjižnicama: pregled provedbe programa 2005.-2007*. [Program: Information about the European Union in public libraries: review of the realization of the program 2005-2007] (Zagreb, Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2007), p. 16.

of the EU, institutional structure of the EU and about the mode of usage of legal and other databases as well as of the sources of information about the European Union in Croatia. The workshops were accompanied by announcements and ads in the means of public information. The publishing and promotional activities resulted in the setting up of a web site³⁸ in Croatian and English language on the pages of the Croatian Librarian Society (www.hkdrustvo.hr/euinfo). After the program had finished the said web site has been regularly updated. The fact that almost all people's libraries in the Republic of Croatia have put a link to the site on their web pages speaks for itself about the quality of that web site. The brochure of the authoress Aleksandra Čar "*Sources of Information about the European Union*" brings a review of the availability of information sources about the EU in Croatia, and in a simple way guides the user through the huge quantity of European documentation. Education and training about the European Union for librarians from national, and other kinds of libraries, have continued even after the Program had ended. The Head Committee of the Croatian Librarian Society (HKD) has decided that the information basis should continue to be updated through the national libraries project *Portal* (www.knjiznica.hr) and also that the Centre for Permanent Professional Improvement of Librarians should pay special attention to information sources about the EU.³⁹

e) Other Libraries in Croatia

ea) National and University Library in Zagreb

We must, however, mention other libraries as well, such as the National and University Library (Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica - NSK), which is the roof scientific library in the Republic of Croatia. As a national library, it is included in many forms of international cooperation, of which we will only mention a few.

With the introduction of the "*European library*"⁴⁰ - a project of digital libraries in Europe in 2005, the National and University Library, having joined the project and participated in its creation, has become a part of the European cultural space relating to books. Through its formal membership in the foundation of the Conference of European National Librarians CENL, the Library is included in regular cooperation with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other organizations. The most important purpose of this foundation is the establishment of cooperation among national libraries and setting up of an efficient network for the presentation of national collections of cultural heritage securing permanent access to these materials. The National and University Library possesses the largest collection of official publications and documentation of foreign governments and international organizations in this part of Europe. Among other documents, thanks to donations and agreements about exchange, the Library also possesses official publications of the Council of Europe and the European Union which are all publicly available.

eb) The Library of the Croatian Parliament

The Library of the Parliament is a special library which, among other services, performs thematic searches of legislation and other topics of interest for users and that also includes information about the EU accession of the Republic of Croatia to the Union.

Under the auspices of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe the Library of the Croatian Parliament has been included into the internal network of research and documentation services of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation - ECPRD. The processing of the materials has started in the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁹ Ibid., at pp. 19-21.

⁴⁰ Accessible at: <<http://theeuropeanlibrary.org>>

year 2000 with the publication of the Glossary EUROVOC⁴¹. Together with the Croatian Information and Documentation Reference Agency (Hrvatska informacijsko-dokumentacijska referalna agencija - HIDRA (publisher of the Croatian version of the Glossary) the Library of the Croatian Parliament cooperates with the Bureau for Official Publications of the EU, working on suggestions for new entries and changes in the existing EUROVOC Glossary. Since 2005, Croatian Parliament has been included in the IPEX project - *Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange*⁴², the purpose of which – as its name implies – is the exchange of EU related information between national parliaments of the member states as well as of the states that are candidates for membership in the EU. The head of the Library is an IPEX correspondent and, in cooperation with other employees of the Library, she is also responsible for the maintenance and updating of the IPEX web pages with documents and information passed by the bodies of public authority of the Republic of Croatia and by the institutions of the EU as well as with the documents relating to the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union since the year 2001.⁴³

ec) Information Centre for European Law – EU-i, Library of the Faculty of Law in Zagreb

In 2008 the European Commission has established the EU-i Centre for European Law in the Library of the Faculty of Law in Zagreb. With its work and activities the Centre has an important role in bringing the European Union closer to a wider public, and it is of great and reliable help for the academic community in Croatia, especially for the Faculties of Law in Rijeka, Split and Osijek. The head of the Centre provides permanent professional perfection for information experts and offers undergraduate students in Zagreb, who are attending courses on European integrations a much simpler and easier access to information about and from the EU. The web address: <http://euinfo.pravo.hr> provides access to a review of reliable and accurate information about the law and the politics of the EU. Users interested in specific areas of the European law can find relevant information in the Europa Info Bulletin, which is published by the Centre twice a year and which is also accessible from the Europa Info web site.

V. Specific Examples: Pécs and Osijek in EU Information Provision

1. The European Documentation Centre in Pécs

a) Organisational Background

Most of the 14 Hungarian EDCs function in the organisation of a university or college, more specifically, in the university or college library. This has many advantages, since the EDC's functions are that of a specialised research library: developing and maintaining a collection and services, with the emphasis on reference services. In Pécs, although physically the EDC operated in the Faculty of Law Library from the beginning, organisationally it belongs to the Faculty, not the University Library. This affords closer contact with the Faculty's lecturers

⁴¹ A multilingual, multidisciplinary glossary consisting of 21 sections and 127 subsections, which includes all activities of the European Union and serves as the indexing system of the Croatian legislation compatible with the legislation of the European Union, it is accessible at the following Internet address: <http://eurovoc.europa.eu>

⁴² Accessible at: <http://www.ipex.eu/ipex>

⁴³ K. Grošek & S. Ramljak, "Informacijska suradnja Knjižnice Hrvatskoga sabora s institucijama i tijelima Europske unije" [Information Cooperation of the Library of the Croatian Parliament with Institutions and Bodies of the European Union], presentation at the conference 12th Days of Special and Academic Libraries: *Libraries: Where to Go Further?*, held in Opatija from 11th to 14th May 2011.

and students; it also oriented the EDC's collection towards the legal aspects of European integration.

aa) The University of Pécs, the Library and the Faculty of Law

The modern **University of Pécs** was founded on 1 January 2000 through the merger of Janus Pannonius University, the Medical University of Pécs and the Illyés Gyula Teacher Training College of Szekszárd. However, its roots go back to 1367 when the Anjou king of Hungary, Louis the Great established the first Hungarian university in Pécs. With its ten faculties the University of Pécs plays a significant role in Hungarian higher education.

The **University Library** serves the whole institution with its Central Library and Faculty and Departmental Libraries. The predecessor of the library, which was the first public library in Hungary, was established by György Klimo, Bishop of Pécs, in 1774. The neoclassical building erected by Bishop Ignác Szepessy has been housing the library since 1830. To foster the establishment of the new university library of the Royal Erzsébet University fleeing from Bratislava to Pécs Bishop Gyula Zichy put the bishop's library at the disposal of the University in 1923. In 2010, the University Central Library and the Benedek Ferenc Law and Economics Library, together with the Csorba Győző County and City Library, moved into the newly built Regional Library and Centre for Learning, a modern building constructed as one of the key projects of the Pécs 2010 – Cultural Capital of Europe programme. The goal of the project was to establish a Knowledge Centre in the region that corresponds to modern requirements and meets the expectations of users. The institution satisfies the information and documentation needs of people living in the region, matches professional standards set up by the European Union and provides a place for cultural and social events.

The contemporary **Faculty of Law** of the University of Pécs began its work as the Royal Erzsébet University of Bratislava, from where it was relocated after the First World War. Throughout the 20th century, the Faculty has continued its work and formed a basis of the developing higher education project in Pécs: from 1982, as a faculty of the Janus Pannonius University, and since 2000, in the framework of the University of Pécs. Education and research on European affairs and European integration started in earnest in the 1990s at the University of Pécs, when several faculties established training programmes and courses on the history, law, politics and economics of the European Community / European Union, or integrated this aspect of their subjects into other curricula. The Centre for European Research and Education was founded in 1996 by the Senate of the University to function as an independent university institution whose main aim has been the organising and maintenance of European studies education and training. Today, the Centre is a part of the Faculty of Law.

ab) Other Organisations in Pécs

Information provision on the European Union in Pécs other than the University can be connected mostly to institutions of the Baranya County Government: the Csorba Győző County and City Library, functioning as a member of the EU public library network, and the Europe Direct relay that started its operation in 2000 as a European Information Point. Independently operating, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Pécs-Baranya is an Enterprise Europe Network partner, providing services to small- and medium-sized enterprises in the county.

b) The History of the EDC

The EDC, functioning as a part of the Department of Public International Law and European Law of the University of Pécs, Faculty of Law has been receiving the documents published for the institutions and bodies of the European Union by the Publications Office of the EU since 1992, when it was established as the second European Documentation Centre in Hungary. Placed in the Library of the Faculty, the EDC had a separate room and developed a

classification system based on the one used in the library of the European University Institute in Florence. The EDC, while keeping its status as a part of the Faculty of Law, moved together with the Faculty of Law: in 2003, to a new location in the same building in the newly established Library of the Faculties of Law and Economics, and in 2010 to the Regional Library and Centre for Learning. Over the course of its history, at any given time there have been two separate librarians associated with the EDC, although in some cases either or both of them had other responsibilities in the Faculty Library as well.

c) The Collection

The main part of the EDC collection has always been the selection of documents supplied by the Publications Office: official publications and others. In the first years, the Official Journal of the European Union, the Reports of Cases before the Court of Justice, COM documents, the annual General Report on the activities of the European Union, the Bulletin of the European Union the documentation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions were all received in printed form. Due to changes in technology, more specifically the widespread availability of the internet and databases like EUR-lex, today these are seldom consulted on paper, and make up a less significant part of the collection, mostly kept for archival purposes.

The Publications Office also produces several hundred non-official publications every year for its “author services” (the institutions and bodies of the EU), many of which are also sent automatically to all EDCs. With the establishment of EU Bookshop, the online bookstore of the Publications Office, we also have a chance to order (mostly free of charge) a copy of the other publications, or download them in a pdf format. The Pécs EDC takes advantage of this system especially because the number and quality of publications received automatically has been steadily decreasing in recent years.

The acquisitions budget of the Faculty of Law Library has also made it possible for the EDC to buy the relevant literature published by commercial publishers: acquisitions policy mandates that we buy or otherwise acquire all books published on European integration in Hungarian, while providing a selection of the English and German language literature, mostly focusing on EU law and politics. The EDC also subscribes to several periodicals relevant to its collection. The collection increased significantly in 2010, when during and after the move into the new Library and Centre for Learning, the collections of the libraries involved were harmonised, and several thousand volumes were moved from closed stacks to open shelves – many to the EDC. The EDC also makes good use of the electronic databases available on the internet or subscribed to by the University of Pécs, thus extending the collection with e-books and electronic journals, mostly in English. All acquisitions are done in coordination with the Faculty of Law Library and the Central Library of the University of Pécs, to avoid unnecessary duplication and to afford a better collection overall.

d) Services

The EDC is open to the public from 8 am to 8 pm on every day of the week. All of the physical collection is on open shelves, available for consultation, some books for circulation. Reference services are available in person, by phone or via email. The EDC produces a bibliography on EU affairs, issues a bi-monthly electronic newsletter, has participated in compiling an online research guide on the EU. The EDC reference librarians also teach courses on EU reference work, the use of EU databases.

2. EU *i* – Information Centre in Osijek

The European Commission is establishing information centres with non-member states within the “EU *i*” network in the framework of the information strategy “EU in the world“ in order to ensure better informing of citizens about the European Union. Upon the signing of the

Contract with the European Commission, in early 2011, the Faculty of Law in Osijek acquired the status of EU *i* –info centre. Since the EU *i* – centre is now in the process of establishment, an action plan has been designed for conducting work and various activities. Through systematic access to EU *i* - info, the Faculty of Law in Osijek will promote, develop, teach, research into and disseminate information about the recognizing of values on which the European Union is based and it will raise the level of understanding of the advantages and challenges of the Accession to the EU both for the academic and for the entire community with special emphasis on the local and regional levels.

a) Access to Information and Information Availability

aa) Collections

Publications Office of the European Union, domiciled in Luxembourg, distributes and delivers its publications to the Centre. So far, not many titles have arrived. Most of those that have been sent belong to the so-called “grey literature”, under which librarians and researchers understand publications that are not accessible through usual, commercial channels, but that are authentic and topical. Publications, which the Centre has received, are mainly printed studies and reports of EU organs and institutions for particular areas of EU politics that are also accessible on-line. The received materials have been organized as a separate collection within the framework of the existing library fund of the Library of the Faculty of Law in Osijek. Bibliographic data referring to these materials are catalogued according to international standards of bibliographic control for the processing of library materials and they are searchable in the integrated library information system CROLIST. They may be used in the reading rooms of the Centre. The budget of the Faculty intended for the acquisition of library materials is also used for the purchasing of editions of scientific and professional literature in the field of European Law in Croatian, English and German for the purposes of scientific staff and students. The users of the services of the Centre have at their disposal a number of computers with free access to official information sources of the EU and to legal data bases (*EUR-Lex*, *PRE-Lex*, *OEIL- Legislative Observatory*, *CURIA* etc.) through the Europa server and through other on-line sources with professional search assistance. The Centre has been given access to the European Sources Online (ESO) database. ESO offers simple access, professional and wide coverage with quality integral texts and bibliographic data referring to books, academic magazines, documents of European Union institution and also to court practice. The web site is currently under construction. Once finished, these web pages will provide access to information relating primarily to the local community with links to the County Council for European Integrations, to bodies of regional and local self-government responsible for European integrations, to information about events taking place at the Centre and to other local events, that are useful for the region and for the users of the library and of the Centre. The web pages will also provide information about the EU in the Croatian language.⁴⁴

ab) Education

A quality way to achieve maximum usability of the found and existing sources is the development and implementation of a program of education of users through seminars, workshops and panel-discussions. The Centre will organize professional workshops in cooperation with the Department for European Law. These workshops would qualify the

⁴⁴ S. Ramljak, "Izgradnja učinkovite mreže za informiranje građana o Europskoj uniji u narodnim knjižnicama" [Development of efficient European Union information network for the citizens in public libraries], in A. Belan-Simić and A. Čar, ed., *Program Informacije o Europskoj uniji u narodnim knjižnicama: pregled provedbe programa 2005-2007.* [Program: Information about the European Union in public libraries: review of the realization of the program 2005-2007] (Zagreb, Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2007), p. 148.

students to independently search the databases for required contents, which is in keeping with the Bolognese process of studying that expects students to be able to independently find relevant information and evaluate the found sources following the recommendations of the European Union. Professional workshops would be based on the concept of the outcome of learning, which includes the feedback about what the attendant is expected to know, what he is supposed to understand and how education has helped him acquire the planned level of knowledge. The education would also include the searching of the Library's on-line catalogue and other legal and interdisciplinary databases to which the Faculty has access. (The practice in the work with the students of the Faculty of Law has shown that, regardless of how much students are individually trained for searching the materials they need, it is still necessary to systematically raise their level of knowledge and improve their informational literacy). Furthermore, the planned activities include the organization of panel-discussions and seminars about the thematic aspects and the politics of the European Union on the county and local levels, with participation of competent experts for targeted users: academic community (through libraries of other faculties within the University and through the Town and University Library), young people (libraries in secondary schools - program EU and youth), experts, (businesspeople), citizens (Europe for citizens).

3. Possibilities for Cooperation

One of the principal missions of the Centre of ideas is that the EU *i*-info of the Faculty of Law should – through partnership and cooperation – become the centre and mediator for the flow of information about events and activities of institutions that are – through projects and programmes–related to European integrations on county and local community level (Regional agency for the development of Slavonia and Baranya, town institutions etc.), and all these information are planned to be uploaded to the Centre's web site. Cooperation with the Info-centre for youth in Osijek through programmes that concern young people. Cooperation should certainly be established with the Delegation of the European Union in Croatia, and especially with the EU *i* –info centres in the Croatia. Continuation of the successful cooperation with the “EU *i*” – Information Centre for European Law at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb is also necessary. In this regard, the cooperation in the EDC network of Hungary could be a role model. As to cooperation between the Pécs and the Osijek Centres, this could be based on the fact that the two Faculties of Law are in close cooperation via various cross-border programmes and the City and University Library in Osijek also has a continuing professional and cultural collaboration with the Pécs County and University Libraries. Via exchanging best practices, sharing experiences and knowledge and designing means to providing easier access to each other's collections all participating institutions will gain.

VI. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can see that on one hand libraries are well suited for the provision of European information to both the academic and the general public, and that the European Union, especially the Commission, has extensively made use of this ability since the earliest years of the integration. Library-based EU information centres can exist in different situations and provide a valuable contribution to their host organisations in research and education.