



## **IFLA August 2003 – BERLIN**

### **The CERTIDoc project**

#### **Towards a European recognition of the professionals' competencies**

European associations of information professionals have always put a strong focus on the promotion of the profession, the improvement of professionals' qualifications and the recognition of their role in the Information Society.

A notable step in that direction was taken by the ADBS, when in 1994 it established a certification which allowed experienced professionals to obtain recognition of their level of qualification, even if they did not possess the corresponding diploma.

This model was followed in 1997 by SEDIC (Spain) and some years later, in 2001, by DGI (Germany).

#### **From DECIDoc and the Euroguide (1998-2000)**

Such achievements fostered the idea of a common endeavour to go further in the same direction not just in one country, but at the European level.

#### **A grant from the European Commission**

A grant from the European Commission made it possible to undertake the DECIDoc project (Develop EuroCompetencies for Information and Documentation) conceived by members of the European Council of Information Associations.

#### **The Euroguide LIS**

This resulted in the drafting of the *Euroguide LIS: The Guide to Competencies for European Professionals in Library and Information Services*, first published in French in 1999 and now translated into eight other languages.

This guide describes and maps in detail all the competencies which may be required of an information professional, at various levels of qualification.

Another outcome was the definition of compatibility criteria between different certification systems.

#### **Towards CERTIDoc and a European certification system (November 2002-October 2004)**

The project as a whole was sufficiently successful to encourage some of the members of the Consortium to continue working together at the European level and they agreed to put forward a new project, which was also accepted by the European Commission, called CERTIDoc.

#### **Objective**

Its objective is the definition and establishment of a European certification system, as a logical development of the second stage of DECIDoc. This must be completed within a mere two years (between November 2002 and October 2004).

#### **The Consortium**

The Consortium responsible for the project comprises three professional associations: ADBS, DGI, SEDIC, plus a Belgian university and a French bureau of consultants.

#### **A European certification procedure**

The models provided by the existing French, German and Spanish certification systems will naturally be the starting point for designing and establishing a new, truly European system, but many innovations will have to be introduced.

The certification procedure will be the same one in each of the centers authorized to deliver it, it will refer to the same range of competencies, and the certificate will have the same value in each of the (European) countries where the representative associations subscribe to the system.

#### **A European certification system available to any information professional**

In the DECIDoc project, one may sense a bias toward documentalists rather than librarians or archivists.

Since the beginning of the CERTIDoc project, it was decided to make European certification available to any information professional, whatever the material (s)he is working on or the techniques (s)he is using, whatever the type of institution where (s)he works : library, information or documentation center, archive, etc.

#### **A European certification system facilitating professional and geographical mobility**

So the European certification system will cover a broader field than the original national ones. It will address a larger community, facilitating professional and geographical mobility.

This new intention is already clearly apparent in the work presently carried out (in summer 2003) by several teams in different countries to create the main tools necessary to set up a certification system: to revise the *Euroguide LIS* in order to publish an updated second edition in 2004; to draw up the general regulation of the system and its more detailed rules; to build a computerized system enabling the self-evaluation of any individual's professional competencies.

The work is currently proceeding but we only have fifteen months left. We hope that all European associations in the information field will help us, at least by supporting the idea of a European certification system, or by joining the group of Associate members of our Consortium, as several library associations have already done.

**Jean Meyriat** (15 July 2003)

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