

The Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance

Convened by CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals



c/o CILIP 7 Ridgmount Street London WC1E 7AE

February 21st 2014

Dear Lord Younger

We apologise for having to write to you in quick succession about different copyright issues but, as you are of course aware, there is at present a lot of concurrent government activity on the copyright front.

Libraries are major stakeholders in the provision of reading services for visually impaired and other reading disabled people (VIPs), which is why we have worked hard with the VIP community to bring about the Marrakesh VIP Treaty 2013.

We have heard from European colleagues that there is apparently a problem at EU level concerning Member State and EU competences to sign and ratify the Marrakesh Treaty. We understand that the next Council meeting on 28th February will discuss the matter. Since, so far, only 5 EU Member States, including the UK, have signed the Treaty, we are concerned that, to the detriment of visually impaired people, if the EU itself is unable to sign and ratify, some other Member States may hold back from doing so unilaterally. Given the approaching European elections and appointment of a new Commission later this year, any delay in the EU being able to sign and proceed towards ratification may discourage some other Member States from doing so in their own right as quickly as they might.

Marrakesh is primarily a human rights Treaty, so we urge that the UK seeks a compromise on February 28th - perhaps seeking a mixed approach following the precedents of other IP treaties such as the World Copyright Treaty 1996 and the Beijing AV Performances Treaty 2012, whereby Member States proceed unilaterally to sign and subsequently ratify Marrakesh (thus maintaining their competence in this area) and the EU also does so on its own account.

Yours sincerely



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