



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

20th of November 2020

IFLA's statement made at the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights at the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Mr Chair, thank you for the floor.

We very much welcome the focus on ensuring better outcomes for authors in this proposal. It is one that libraries not only strongly agree with, but also put into practice, through supporting discovery, offering free marketing, and creating the readers and writers of the future.

It is with this in mind that we believe that this proposal risks taking too narrow a focus. If WIPO is to offer practical guidance to members, it needs to do so on the basis not of assumptions, but of evidence.

This is particularly true given that PLR implies additional spending by governments.

As highlighted in the statement by ALCS, we are in the bizarre situation of seeing the creative industries enjoy growing revenues, while authors themselves are experiencing falls, including in countries which have PLR systems.

What could certainly help, therefore, is a fuller understanding of both the costs and benefits of different measures.

Not just public lending rights, but also other forms of support.

These could cover other forms of financial aid which may involve fewer intermediaries and associated costs, and more provide for more accountability. Such measures include grants, tax breaks, residencies, or focused-social security systems.

The study should also cover legal tools such as rights reversion, possibilities to renegotiate unfair contracts, and transparency over earnings, particularly when it comes to digital works.

A study focused on PLR alone risks providing at best an incomplete picture of how governments can support authors. At worst, it risks doing a major disservice to authors.