



# European**Toy**Libraries

## Documentation for Toy Libraries

*These texts have been prepared by ETL for people who wish to consult reference documents about toy libraries.*

Title: Documentation for Toy Libraries

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By European Toy Libraries Group (ETL)

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## DOCUMENTATION FOR TOY LIBRARIES

### Directory

1. Definition of a toy library.....	p. 4
2. Toy libraries in Europe.....	p. 4
3. History of the Group of European Toy Libraries (ETL).....	p. 5
4. Purpose of ETL.....	p. 6
5. Members of ETL.....	p. 7
5.1 Information about toy libraries in Europe.....	p. 9
5.2 Membership form.....	p. 10
6. Working Standards.....	p. 11
7. Examples of Charts of Quality.....	p. 18
7.1 Great-Britain.....	p. 18
7.2 Switzerland.....	p. 20
7.3 Italy.....	p. 22
7.4 France.....	p. 25
7.5 Portugal.....	p. 32
8. Training in Europe.....	p. 38
9. World Play Day.....	p. 44
10. Bibliography.....	p. 45
11. ETL Annual Newsletters.....	p. 46

## 1. DEFINITION OF A TOY LIBRARY

**Toy libraries provide resources for play, including toys, games, trained staff and dedicated space on a non-commercial basis.**

That means:

European Toy Libraries are open to everybody: children and adults, able bodied and disabled persons, institutions and organizations

A toy library is a service that provides to members the opportunity for shared play and / or the loan of toys and games. A toy library can be operated by individuals, charitable organizations, local, regional or national governments or any other such agency or group.

Toy libraries, as often as possible, are to serve as a community resource, offering information, guidance and support to members in addition to the loan of toys and games.

Toy libraries serve people without regard of race, sex, handicap, religion, language or national origin.

*“European Toy Libraries are open to everybody”*

## 2. TOY LIBRARIES IN EUROPE

**1959 - A first small toy library opens in Denmark**

**1960- UNESCO presents a plan to create toy libraries**

From then on, toy libraries were founded in many countries like in Sweden, France, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland etc.

Now there are around 6500 toy libraries in Europe.

The main quality of European toy libraries is the fact that most of them are open to everybody.

In some countries toy libraries are mainly for children and adults with special needs.

Most European toy libraries are run by local authorities or private organisations as independent, non-profit organisations, with both professionals and volunteers.

Toy libraries lend out toys and games, provide space and opportunity to play and contribute to the quality of life.

And most countries have a national association of toy libraries.



ETL Meeting in Barcelona 2007



ETL Meeting in Lisbon 2010

### 3. HISTORY OF THE GROUP OF EUROPEAN TOY LIBRARIES (ETL)

In April 1996 a questionnaire was sent to the national associations of toy libraries in Europe. The results of this questionnaire showed that the representatives of the European Toy Libraries supported the formation of a European Group of toy libraries.

*ETL is the most active continental group in the world.*

During the 7th International Conference of Toy Libraries in Zurich (Switzerland) in 1996 the Group of European Toy Libraries (ETL) was founded with the goal to create a platform for the toy libraries in Europe.

Delegates from 11 countries agreed that a project should be developed and a meeting should be held within one or two years.

The first meeting prepared by France and Switzerland was held on March 13th, 1998 in Paris. The aims, the status of the organization and the regularity of the meetings were determined.

Since then a meeting has taken place every year in a different country.

The legal status was discussed and in for the time being it was agreed that the informal status of a group of European Toy Libraries should not be changed.

In 2003 a definition which would consider the different kind of toy libraries in Europe was elaborated in Graz, Austria.

In 2004 Portugal presented the logo for the European Toy Libraires (ETL) Group of toy libraries. From now on the name "Group of European Toy Libraries" was used, and it was also agreed that for the time being, the status of an informal group should be maintained.

The annual meetings were very well accepted by the different countries and different improvements have been achieved, such as a better communication and cooperation, such as a questionnaire about training in Europe, the elaboration of working standards for toy libraries etc.

In 2013 the question about the creation of a European association was raised again, but delegates decided not to change the status for the present.

Over all we can say that the Group of European Toy Libraries with its around 5500 toy libraries is the most active continental group in the world.

The European group is committed to the beliefs that play, playthings and playful interaction are essential to optimal educational, physical, psychological, social and cultural development.

The European Group is an informal group.

**SINCE 1996 REGULARLY MEETINGS WERE HELD IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES:**

1996 Zurich  
1998 Paris  
1999 Lisbon  
2000 London  
2001 Florence  
2002 Lisbon  
2003 Graz, Austria  
2004 Brasov, Rumania  
2005 Lisbon  
2006 Athens  
2007 Barcelona  
2008 Noordwijk, Netherlands  
2009 Winterthur, Switzerland  
2010 Lisbon  
2011 Brussels  
2012 Istanbul  
2013 Greve, Denmark  
2014 Athens





### Who Should Join

National Toy / Leisure Library Associations Toy Libraries, play professionals, individuals interested in promoting play.

## 4. PURPOSE OF ETL

The purposes of the ETL are:

To disseminate the concept of toy libraries as a means for bringing play and play materials to people.

To serve as a link between national toy library organizations, within Europe, providing opportunity for international exchange of ideas and materials.

To maintain a liaison with other organizations and associations concerned with developmental and social issues, health, education and play.

To organize common presentations at international events such as international Conferences organized by ITLA

To cooperate with organizations with similar goals.

ETL Meeting in Brussels 2011



### **ITLA International**

The Group of European Toy Libraries is a section of ITLA (International Association of toy libraries) and has a close cooperation with ITLA.

ITLA is a non-profit making international organization comprising of national toy library associations, institutions and direct international members.



One of the main goals of ITLA is the cooperation between the different national organisations. To strengthen this cooperation ITLA organises an International Conference every three years.

Another service is the ITLA Documentation Centre at the Centro Internazionale Ludoteche office in Florence, Italy.

ETL Meeting in Netherlands 2008





## 5. MEMBERS OF ETL

*ETL has members from 20 countries all across Europe*

### Website Addresses of ETL Members

#### Coordinator

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CH-6403 Kuessnacht



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<http://www.iacrianca.pt/en/associacoes-internacionais/310-european-toy-libraries>

#### Austria



[www.ludovico.at](http://www.ludovico.at)

#### Belgium



[www.spelotheken.be](http://www.spelotheken.be) (Flandres)  
[www.ludobel.be](http://www.ludobel.be) (Région Francophone)

#### Croatia



[www.kgz.hr](http://www.kgz.hr)

#### Denmark



[www.legeteksforeningen.dk](http://www.legeteksforeningen.dk)

#### Estonia



[www.lelula.ee](http://www.lelula.ee)

#### France



[www.alf-ludotheques.org](http://www.alf-ludotheques.org)  
ALF Bretagne: [alfbretagne@yahoo.fr](mailto:alfbretagne@yahoo.fr)

#### ETL MEMBERS:

Austria  
Belgium  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Denmark  
Estonia  
France  
Germany  
Great Britain  
Greece  
Hungary  
Italy  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Portugal  
Rumania  
Spain  
Scotland  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Turkey



## 5. MEMBERS OF ETL (CONT.)

### Germany



[www.deutsche-ludotheken.de](http://www.deutsche-ludotheken.de)

### Hungary



[www.mikkamakka.hu](http://www.mikkamakka.hu)

### Italy



[www.centroludoteche.org](http://www.centroludoteche.org)

### Netherlands



[www.speelotheken.nl](http://www.speelotheken.nl)

### Portugal



[www.iacrianca.pt/setores-iac/atividade-ludica](http://www.iacrianca.pt/setores-iac/atividade-ludica)

### Scotland



[www.smartplaynetwork.org](http://www.smartplaynetwork.org)

### Spain



[www.atzar.wordpress.com](http://www.atzar.wordpress.com)

### Sweden



[www.fshl.se](http://www.fshl.se)

### Switzerland



Association suisse des ludothèques  
Verein der Schweizer Ludotheken  
Associazione svizzera delle ludotecas  
Associazione delle ludoteche Svizzere

[www.ludo.ch](http://www.ludo.ch)



## 5.1 INFORMATION ABOUT TOY LIBRARIES IN EUROPE (2013)

Country	Number	National	1st TL	Users	Lend of Toy	Public Help	Staff Payed	Users Pay
Austria	50	no		E	yes	yes	yes	
Belgium	130(fr) 83(fl)	2 x yes	1973	C, E, SP, C, A	Yes(fl) No(fr)	yes	yes+ no	yes
Croatia	19	no	1976	SP, C	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cyprus	6	no	2004	C, SP, A	no	yes	yes	no
Denmark	26	yes	1977	SP C+A	yes	yes	Yes+no	no
France	1200	yes	1967	E	yes	yes	yes	yes
Germany	100	yes	1971	E	yes	yes	no	yes
Great Britain	1000	yes	1967	C, SP C+A	yes	yes	yes+no	yes
Greece	4	yes	1990	C, SP	yes	yes	Yes +no	no
Hungary	8	yes	1993	E	yes	yes	yes+no	yes
Italy	450	no	1977	E	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lithuania	108	no	1994	E, SP/C	yes	no		
Netherlands	300	yes	1974	E, SP/C	yes	yes	yes+no	yes
Portugal	700	no	1975	E, SP/C+A	Yes in some	yes	yes	Yes in some
Romania	27	no	1994	C, SP/C	yes	yes	no	no
Scotland	6							
Spain	600	no	1980	E, SP/C	no	yes	yes	yes
Sweden	5	yes	1964	SP/C	yes	yes	yes	no
Switzerland	372	yes	1972	E	yes	yes	yes+no	yes
Turkey	14	no	1999	C/s	yes	yes	yes	yes
TL in Europe	5208							

*There are a total of 5208 Toy Libraries in Europe*



*Visit to Toy Libraries in Netherlands*

## 5.2 MEMBERSHIP FORM



### MEMBERSHIP FORM

European**Toy**Libraries

#### Premises:

1. Members must live in an European country and speak and understand English;
2. The decision to accept the membership request is exclusively made by ETL group;
3. Individual members are not accepted. In countries where there isn't a National Toy Libraries Association, ETL Group will evaluate case by case.
4. A maximum of 2 representatives of each country can attend the meetings. Exceptions are decided by ETL's Coordinator.

**By completing this membership form you are stating that you have been informed about the premises above and that you comply with these criteria.**

**You also commit to gather information about your country and share ETL's work in your Association/Toy Libraries.**

1. Country: \_\_\_\_\_

2. National Association: \_\_\_\_\_ or  
Country Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

3. National Association Date of Creation: \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Association Website: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Person Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

5.1 Contacts of Person Responsible (e-mail, address, telephone,...):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Place, Date & Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

*By joining ETL you commit not only to gather information about your country to share within the Group, but also to take ETL's work to your toy libraries*