

Statement on Freedom of Expression

Prepared by the Task Force on Freedom of Expression of the Turkish Librarians' Association (TLA) and adopted by the TLA's General Executive Board in February 22, 2008.

The freedom of expression, which is considered to be one of the inalienable human rights and the foundation of democracy, is the right of all persons to have access to all expressions of knowledge and to express their own. Being a core concept in information services, the freedom of expression is at the same time a significant *raison d'être* of information centers (libraries, archives, documentation centers, and so on).

The Turkish Librarians' Association (TLA) safeguards and supports the freedom of expression as specified in the United Nations' *Bill of Rights*, the Council of Europe's *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Right to Freedom of Expression and Information*, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' (IFLA) *Statement on Freedom of Expression*, and the TLA's *Professional Code of Ethics*, and adopts the following principles:

1. Information centers shall adopt the freedom of expression-centered approaches in developing policies and in practice.
2. All persons have a right to have equal and free access to information in a contemporary society. Information centers make it possible and provide opportunity to exercise this right in the best way. Persons cannot be precluded from making use of expressions of knowledge in information centers because of political, religious, national, ethical, commercial, racial, ethnical background, gender and similar reasons.
3. As their social responsibilities necessitate, information centers side with the expression and dissemination of all views, and their

- availability in libraries. They oppose censorship and cooperate with other interested persons or institutions on this subject.
4. Resource selection in information centers shall be based not on individual preferences but on professional principles. Information sources cannot be excluded because of their content or of the views, beliefs and opinions of their authors or publishers.
 5. The workers of information centers shall refrain from behaviors or practices that are considered as censorship in technical processes and user services that block or inhibit access to information sources.
 6. As per their objectives and functions, information centers shall offer their facilities such as exhibition or meeting halls to the needy persons or groups without discrimination.
 7. The workers of information centers shall behave according to the principles of TLA's Statement on Freedom of Expression. They shall not be faced with unjust acts or practices because of this and their superiors shall not force them to act otherwise.
 8. Information centers shall respect the privacy of their users. The identities of users and the sources they use shall therefore not be declared to the third parties.

As much as these principles are improved in parallel with contemporary developments and can be practiced, they will help information centers carry out their real functions and contribute to the living of society by internalizing democracy.

Turkish Librarians' Association

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