

HOSTILE TIMES:
LIBRARIAN ASSOCIATIONS AND CENSORSHIP
THE VALENCIAN EXPERIENCE.

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WHO WE ARE

- COBDCV:
Official Association of Librarians of
Valencia.
- Member of FESABID.

CO
BD
CV

CENSORSHIP



Libraries as Democratic Pillars

- Public libraries - Democratic mission
- Guarantee universal access
- No censorship
- Support to informed, critical citizens
- Contribute to democratic societies

Global Rise of Censorship

- Increase in censorship episodes worldwide
- USA: 10,000+ titles removed (2023–2024)
- Targeted topics: sexual diversity, gender identity, LGBTQ+ rights
- Organized ideological pressure

Echo in Europe

- Europe must resist normalization of censorship
- Spain as a testing ground for reactionary agendas
- Attempts to eliminate diversity from shelves
- Historical memory: dictatorship and control of reading

SPAIN IS NOT AN EXCEPTION

- Worrying developments
- Two documented cases in the Region of Valencia:
 - Case 1: Castelló (2021)
 - Case 2: Borriana (2023 - 2024)

Case 1: Castelló (2021)

- Complaint against City Council for distributing books on sexual diversity
- Judge orders temporary removal of 32 titles

COBDCV response:

- Support for school libraries
- Support for Department of Culture, Feminism and LGTBI
- Removing titles

Case 2: Borriana (2023 - 2024)

Political interference:

- Cancellation of magazines in Valencian language
- Obstacles to acquiring LGBTQ+ books
- Restricted section for sexual/family diversity
- Censorship of Barbie and 20,000 Species of Bees
- Library team: Resisted actions
- Informed users
- Requested hearing → intimidation climate

COBDCV & FESABID Responses

COBDCV:

- Defended free access to information
- Defended professional criteria
- Clarified interpretation of Library Law

FESABID:

- Manifesto “A ghost is haunting Europe/Spain”
- Defense of access without

Regional escalation

- Dec 2023: PNL in Valencian Parliament
- Claim: LGBTQ+ materials cause “identity problems” in minors
- No evidence, no complaints, no cases
- Proposal: segregated sections in libraries >25,000 inhabitants
- COBDCV: segregation distorts the Library Law
- PNL approved (VOX + Partido

Valencian laws:

- Law 10/2007, Art. 12: equality, pluralism, privacy
- Law 4/2011, Art. 20: professional judgment essential

International standards:

- IFLA, UNESCO, Council of Europe, EBLIDA
- UNESCO Manifesto (2022): no ideological/political censorship

Conclusions

- Censorship begins subtly → escalates quickly
- Libraries: neutral spaces, not neutralized spaces
- Serve everyone; defend rights of all citizens
- Collections must follow professional, not political criteria
- Hiding LGBTIQ+ materials violates rights
- Sexual diversity is a reality; libraries must reflect it

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we say NO to censorship

"Poetry does not want
followers, it wants lovers."

Federico García Lorca

Libraries do not want followers, just free
citizens.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

Is this a trend or isolated?
Are librarians prepared?