Towards a concerted action for a European network of e-print servers

4 opinions:

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- Do we need a co-ordinating organisation?
  - Technical standards, protocols and tools: OAI does the job
    (but quality electronic publishing may require some additional help!)
  - Awareness raising for server setup, author contributions, certification, acceptance by funding agencies and career assessors: ??
    Clear need of structural and authoritative support!

- How is the situation in the U.S.A.?
  - Strong national organisations (ARL, CNI, DLF,…) are supporting OAI financially; they deliver representatives
  - SPARC under umbrella of ARL – although actions were up to now rather along traditional publishing channels – recently getting more interested in OAI-activities
  - Rich sponsoring foundations (e.g. Mellon)
  - NSF sponsoring individual projects

- What do we have in Europe?
  - In several countries strong national library co-ordinating societies, individual e-publishing initiatives
  - LIBER insufficiently recognized as leader in the field: no relation with national societies, perceived as too academic, low budget
  - SPARC is discussing setting up an independent European division (under LIBER umbrella?)
  - Sponsoring is difficult: EC is industry-related, SOROS for Eastern-EU, ESF depends on national funding agencies…

- Possible solution?
  - Upgrading of LIBER:
    - Externally as agglomerate of national societies
    - Internally by rejuvenation: more dynamic, action-oriented
    - Extending its membership
  - SPARC-like subdivision (eventually with separate membership)
    - Awareness building within academic community
    - Co-ordination of electronic scholarly communication: networking of e-publishing, certification,..
    - Lobbying for academic recogniton of its products; organising contact with other organisations (ESF, EC, national groups, learned societies, SPARC-US, industry,…)