

# Lawless Roads: To and fro between Ireland and Italy

Library | **Michiel Tegelaars**

In December 2009 Emir Lawless will be leaving the service of the Institute and of the EUI Library after having worked here since 1976. She participated fully in the “heroic age” of the Library. During most of 1976 the embryonic library holdings consisted of a number of big cartons full of books and journal volumes heaped high in what today is the Vasco da Gama room. The small crew of recently recruited librarians was then racing to put together a small collection of material to offer to the ten professors and forty researchers who were going to kick off the first academic year in 1976-1977. The Library opened in October 1976 with some 10,000 volumes which occupied provisional shelving in a corner of the Refectory.

Emir was there during the difficult period of the combined task of building up the library collections at breakneck speed, and of the in-house development of the Library’s first online automated system and catalogue – with both librarians and researchers in the role of guinea pigs - while at the same time trying to put together a set of library services for a growing and impatient audience of academics. When, after some years, the basics were in place she was given the further task of running and developing the European Documentation Centre. Having worked in the European Parliament Library before coming to the EUI,

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she was a natural for the job. Besides dealing with the constant influx of the publications of the European institutions, over the years she built up a network of correspondents in all the institutions. As a result, and to the advantage of our library users, there were not many documents or texts, circulating in Commission, Council, Court or Parliament, that she could not get hold of. In addition, she is one of the team of subject specialists who do most of the selection of the book-, journal-, and now also digital material that the Library acquires. If today the Library of the EUI is rated in the first rank of European studies collections, a fair deal of the merit belongs to her.

Add to this that all this time she has been ever ready to give help and advice - smilingly and unstintingly - to both her colleagues and to generations of researchers. We are going to miss her in more ways than one.

She is now going to divide her time between Florence and Dublin and keep in close touch with two sets of friends. We count on being included in the Florence set! ■

