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## COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND MEDIA

### **The libraries and museums of Europe in times of change**

Rapporteur: Lady Diana ECCLES, United Kingdom, European Conservatives Group

#### **Draft report**

##### **A. Preliminary draft resolution**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses the cultural, social and economic importance of libraries and museums. As key stewards of culture and heritage in Europe, libraries and museums have traditionally enjoyed a unique role and special responsibility within societies. They continue to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly as places where knowledge is created and transmitted to populations at large. However, as economic changes and rapid technological innovation have had considerable effect, the Assembly believes that the roles and responsibilities of libraries and museums need to be reviewed creatively and strategically to respond to those emerging needs.

2. While acknowledging current budgetary constraints facing governments, the Assembly considers that governments should protect culture and heritage infrastructure for the benefit of future generations. With the growing importance of the knowledge economy in Europe, libraries and museums are well placed to act as a resource for human development and lifelong learning. They also provide safe and dynamic meeting places for the local community. Moreover, libraries and museums can be instrumental in creating jobs, attracting businesses and supporting the overall investment climate. Therefore the Assembly affirms that public funding in this sector should be regarded as an investment that can generate return in the form of social benefits and economic growth - not as an avoidable cost.

3. The Assembly believes that leadership and vision are essential for libraries and museums to be able to adjust and develop in times of change. While libraries and museums need to remain accountable for public funding, they also need to preserve their entitlement to raise and allocate funds and therefore retain a certain autonomy in decision-making. This allows them to look for better solutions in financial and staff management, working with volunteers and engaging in new partnerships.

4. The Assembly recommends that the Council of Europe member States:

4.1. recognise the social, economic and cultural importance of libraries and museums, and their role in preserving the cultural legacy for future generations and in presenting new trends in art and cultural sphere;

4.2. have greater cross-government recognition and support for libraries and museums;

4.3. provide libraries and museums with the funding required to fulfil their role in the community;

4.4. ensure that the public service provided by the smaller institutions is maintained as part of the wide cultural and heritage infrastructure;

4.5. promote the concept of leadership and allow libraries and museums sufficient autonomy to directly manage their staff and budgets;

4.6. support libraries and museums to position themselves as hubs for digital education and innovation for the benefit of the local communities, by ensuring free internet access, allocating

resources and sponsoring national and international information networks that are mutually compatible.

5. The Assembly also recommends that the Council of Europe member States develop strategic thinking to reform, wherever necessary, the library and museum sectors. The process should include pooling wide expertise and consultation and involve a broad range of partners including: relevant ministries, national associations of libraries and museums; local authorities; other cultural institutions and the private sector. This could involve the following:

5.1 improve leadership and staffing, and in particular:

5.1.1. establish professional recognition of museum curators, similar to that achieved in the library sector thanks to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA);

5.1.2. develop and promote specific training of staff to diversify skills, to better adapt their work and methods to the changing roles of libraries and museums;

5.1.3. while acknowledging that volunteers cannot replace professional staff, disseminate best practice in engagement and use of volunteers in the cultural sector;

5.2 diversify sources of funding to enable greater financial resilience of the library and museum sectors, and in particular:

5.2.1. review existing legal frameworks to remove barriers to developing public-private funding models;

5.2.2. establish support and capacity building programmes for cultural institutions to develop business planning and fundraising skills that are compatible with their cultural aims and objectives;

5.2.3. ensure that public funding is not reduced as a result of successful fundraising from other sources;

5.2.4. stimulate private individuals and businesses to sponsor cultural institutions and projects using a wide range of tools from tax incentives to public/private matching-funding schemes;

5.2.5. disseminate best practices from other European countries;

5.3 strengthen partnerships and networks, and in particular:

5.3.1. stimulate cooperation within the sector (informal networking between libraries and museums at city level, regional level and national level); and also within a wider cultural sector (connecting museums, libraries, performing arts, film, theatre, music, etc.) to create synergies and maximise the impact of joint efforts;

5.3.2. work across sectors and also outside the cultural sector, to gather new ideas in order to stimulate innovative thinking;

5.4 promote the use of digital technology and creative media, and in particular:

5.4.1. develop a pro-active approach to understanding and incorporating new information technologies into services, so that they continue to meet the needs and expectations of service users;

5.4.2. foster partnerships with digital research centres and commercial providers of digital technology; and share information about best practice in use of new technologies in collection management, information sharing and service development.

6. At the European level, the Assembly recommends that the Council of Europe, the European Union and other relevant partners develop greater international co-operation to share new models and best practice among 47 member States; develop a collaborative approach to raising standards, which will support

sharing of collections and artefacts across European countries; and stimulate cross-border projects to increase mutual engagement and cultural understanding.

7. In the framework of the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA) and Council of Europe Museum Prize scheme, the Parliamentary Assembly invites the European Museum Forum (EMF) to consider awarding a special commendation to small and medium size museums which undertake great efforts and accomplish achievements in a difficult context of scarce resources and often without a supportive climate for investment in the museum sector at national and/or regional level.

**B. Explanatory memorandum by Lady Eccles, rapporteur**

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## 1. Origin, scope and objectives of the report

1. On 27 January 2014, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe referred to our committee for report the motion for a resolution (Doc. 13342) which I had presented with forty other members of the Assembly on 21 October 2013. The committee appointed me rapporteur on 28 January 2014.

2. During 2014, I participated in two important events - the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA 2014) ceremony in Tallinn, Estonia, and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Conference in Birmingham - which provided me with an opportunity to discuss a number of relevant issues with library and museum professionals across Europe. I would also like to thank library and museum professionals in the United Kingdom, whom I have directly consulted, for their valuable advice and guidance. Finally, I wish to particularly thank Dr Mikhail Gnedovsky<sup>1</sup> and Ms Ilona Kish<sup>2</sup> for their help with expertise and research in the preparation of this memorandum.

3. In line with the motion, the present report emphasises that *“... as key stewards of our culture and heritage, libraries and museums have traditionally enjoyed a unique role and special responsibility within societies around the world. But as economic changes and rapid technological innovation have brought about dramatic societal changes, roles and responsibilities of libraries and museums need to be revised creatively and strategically to respond to the emerging societal needs.”*

4. The report will be therefore structured in three main sections: first, looking at new and expanding roles for libraries and museums at the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century; second, considering economic pressures and challenges for both sectors in the current climate of austerity; and finally looking positively at the future, how to make libraries and museums resilient and sustainable in times of change.

5. Notwithstanding the importance and relevance of the big national and regional libraries and museums, I am concentrating on smaller public institutions which play a crucial role in their local community and are under pressure today to reduce their public service or even to close. These smaller institutions may also lack resources and expertise to engage in the process of change, in order to transform the institution's performance and bring it up-to-date. I hope that the report will provide some ideas and guidance to help this sector. We also recognise the importance of archives in both sectors. However we do not have the space in this report to do full justice to the subject.

6. Collections of books and of significant objects have existed since ancient times, but the modern public library and museum originated in the European Enlightenment's belief in the liberating power of knowledge combined with the emergence of mass democracy. The opening up of scholarly Cabinets of Curiosity and royal collections was followed by the creation of new museums by local and national government. These were designed to educate people who were more and more thought of as citizens, to express civic or national pride and, in some cases, to record ways of life which were disappearing as a result of the great social changes. At the same time, a growing awareness of the importance of reading as an essential practice for what we would now call human development and for the economy, led to public funding of libraries.

7. This reports sets out how museums and libraries have responded to the major social, economic and technological changes in European society, and what they need to do to continue to contribute to its development. While the process of adaptation is continuous, libraries and museums retain a fundamental role in supporting civil society. Both are civic spaces, separate from home, work or shops, where people can explore the worlds of culture and nature through self-directed learning. They are safe social spaces where people, whether they are alone or with family or friends, experience in the presence of strangers. Museums and libraries thus reflect an ideal of civility, community and mutual respect which is now, more than ever, necessary for a resilient democracy. Their unique combination of inspiring content and civic space means that they are rich sources of hope, meaning and social connection. The most dynamic museums and libraries are not just responding to social and demographic change, they are making a positive contribution to the continuous task of remaking European civil society.

8. While we have found it difficult to collect comprehensive data for the 47 member countries of the Council of Europe, we have managed to assemble the following statistics: The European Group on Museum Statistics (EGMUS)<sup>3</sup> reports there are about 18,700 museums in the 28 EU countries with 566 million visitors

<sup>1</sup> Director of the Cultural Policy Institute in Moscow, Russia and member of the Board of Trustees at the European Museum Forum (EMF).

<sup>2</sup> Programme Director at Reading and Writing Foundation, Brussels.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.egmus.eu/en/statistics/choose\\_by\\_topic/z/0/](http://www.egmus.eu/en/statistics/choose_by_topic/z/0/).

annually. The average number of museums in these countries amounts to five institutions per 100,000 inhabitants. There are 65,000 public libraries in the European Union with 100 million visitors every year. It is of interest to note that 24 million adults participate annually in non-formal learning activities at their public library and 14 million Europeans use public access computing services. According to Eurostat,<sup>4</sup> the number of library and museum employees within the cultural sector varies from 10% to 40% for 27 EU countries.

9. Libraries and museums have experienced numerous challenges and opportunities over recent years. The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an unprecedented breakthrough in the field of communication but even earlier, the arrival of cinema and TV had challenged the monopoly of museums in visual communication. Libraries were able to hold their position a bit longer, since paper remained the main medium for the written or printed word. However, with the arrival of digital technology and the rapid advance of telecommunications at the turn of the century, both museums and libraries faced what could be described as an identity crisis. Last year the United Kingdom government commissioned William Sieghart with the help of a distinguished panel, to investigate how the public library system in England could best work in the future, and produce a report<sup>5</sup>. Much of this report has relevance to libraries in times of change. It is to be recommended for its research, ideas and suggestions which would be useful across the sector.

10. One of the recent developments in libraries and museums was discovering the importance of their audience. This has meant an increasing dialogue with different groups of people in response to their specific perceptions and needs. Knowledge of and understanding their users and visitors has become part of the library and museum profession; as important as the knowledge of their collections.

11. The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005)<sup>6</sup> underlines the need for heritage institutions, including libraries and museums, to serve their communities and the society. The Convention presents heritage as a resource for human development, the enhancement of cultural diversity, the promotion of intercultural dialogue, as well as part of an economic development model based on the principle of the use of sustainable resources.

## **2. New and expanding roles for libraries and museums**

*"If museums were to fail to respond to social change and to reflect it, they would indeed cease to justify public support."*

*Kenneth Hudson<sup>7</sup>*

*"For libraries and their communities the pace of change requires them to develop their own skills constantly, be that to access knowledge for life's essentials, for enrichment, or for pleasure. Those who lack these skills or find it hard to keep up, are increasingly at a disadvantage socially and economically."*

*Shared Intelligence<sup>8</sup>*

12. Focusing on the audience has brought a fundamental change to the philosophy and methodology of museums. It has created openness to the needs of society. Public libraries always had a strong dialogue with their users, collecting material around local interests and responding to requests for specific titles. However in recent years there has been an emphasis on consultation with users in designing services and even sharing services. This enhanced focus on users' needs has come at a time when libraries and museums are in a position to respond to the cultural, technological and economic challenges posed by the rapidly changing world.

### **2.1. Interpretation of collections**

13. Libraries and museums are encouraging new ways of interacting with, adding to and interpreting their collections. They aim at providing inspiration and deeper insight for their users and visitors, creating conditions for people to be able to take an active role in discussing their heritage and linking it to contemporary agendas. Dialogue and interaction with audiences has improved. People are encouraged to raise questions and engage in debates exploring various issues together with cultural professionals.

<sup>4</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product\\_details/publication?p\\_product\\_code=KS-32-10-374](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-32-10-374).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-library-report-for-england>

<sup>6</sup> <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/199.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> See: Kenneth Hudson. *Museums for the 1980s: a Survey of World Trends*. UNESCO 1977.

<sup>8</sup> See, Shared Intelligence "Digital Leadership Research Overview report" for the Society of Chief Librarians: <http://www.goscl.com/wp-content/uploads/Digital-leadership-research-Overview-Report-July-2014.pdf>.

14. In reaching broader audiences, libraries and museums have discovered the importance of storytelling. Narratives combining images, objects and texts, conveying an overarching plot and reflecting different points of view can serve as an entertaining instrument for communicating and informing. The First Library of City Stories in Moscow, Russia, opened in 2014, offers a programme of lectures, debates, master classes, etc. focused on different issues of life in a big city. Its team is convinced that interest in storytelling will attract a new audience to the library. Similarly, the Juozas Urbysys Centre at the Panevėžys Public Library in Lithuania<sup>9</sup>, has developed the “Nevezis” project: a platform for children’s creativity. The library staff encourage young people to write stories or opinions which are later published in the local newspaper and in the library’s annual almanac. Many museums now think in terms of stories while designing their exhibitions.

15. Rautenstrauch – Joest Museum (Museum of World Cultures) in Cologne, Germany, (Council of Europe Prize 2012) has reinterpreted its excellent ethnological collection with the intention of moving away from the traditional Eurocentric approach. The museum’s new exhibitions tell the story of how different cultures have been interacting, how they see and understand (or misunderstand) each other. There is a separate exhibition for small children in the museum where workshops are held which focus on various aspects of cultural differences. The museum involves minority ethnic communities living in the city in various projects and activities.<sup>10</sup>

16. The permanent exhibition at the Estonian History Museum in Tallinn<sup>11</sup>, opened in 2011 and is housed in the medieval Great Guild Hall. It discloses the story of Estonian past and individuality of the people who lived in Estonia through 8 key questions under the title "Spirit of survival". This innovative and experimental exhibition is one-of-a-kind in Estonia. Visitors can find a captivating overview of history, one that will inspire new stories. It cleverly shows that the persistent and at times even stubborn work of the Estonian people has resulted in an exceptional environment with a unique culture.

## **2.2. Vibrant and dynamic meeting places**

17. Libraries and museums have become vibrant and dynamic meeting places. They are transforming themselves from “temples” into “forums”.<sup>12</sup> Such institutions are placed at the hub of their communities becoming centres of local life and sometimes engines for social and economic development.

18. Many public libraries are changing the way they use the library space. Community groups are invited to organise for themselves events and activities in the library space and in some places library services are jointly designed and managed by the local community. Some libraries are entering into partnerships with local public services, such as public health, employment and adult education to offer a ‘one-stop-shop’ that is also an attractive meeting place for the community. In this way, the public library acts as an information hub for its local authority. In other locations, libraries are in partnership and co-locating with local arts organisations, such as cinemas and theatres to offer a cultural hub where citizens can enjoy and participate in a wide range of arts and cultural activities.

19. Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM)<sup>13</sup> in Marseille France, winner of the 2015 Council of Europe Museum Prize, emerges as the great French National Museum with a new and innovative concept. Besides being an outstanding museum, it functions also as a contemporary Agora. MuCEM has an impressive programme of activities (educational activities, debates with artists and writers, seminars, conferences, cinema festivals, contemporary theatre performances, concerts, etc.) which are very popular, are made widely accessible with modest fees and which treat a vast array of contemporary and often very controversial issues surrounding the Mediterranean.

20. The Marpod Library in Romania is created in conjunction with the local community. The idea was to transform dusty places into modern knowledge centres where everyone from the community is welcome to share and learn. People share local knowledge and wisdom by exchanging personal stories and experiences. Local farmers for example receive information and are assisted in applying for EU subsidies. It is a place where young people can help the elderly to become familiar with computers and the internet. The library premises are also used by the local community to hold meetings.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpq-GMAmtY>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.museenkoeln.de/rautenstrauch-joest-museum/default.aspx?s=2023>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ajaloomuseum.ee/>

<sup>12</sup> See: Duncan F. Cameron. *The Museum, a Temple or the Forum?* First published in: *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, pages 11–24, March 1971.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.mucem.org/en/>

21. Deptford Lounge in Lewisham is an interesting example of this. It is jointly run by Lewisham libraries and the Albany Theatre which is involved in arts programming in the library space. The library is also co-located with a local primary school. This allows the education and cultural sectors to work together in the library space.

### **2.3. Embedding libraries and museums in their community**

22. Libraries and museums develop links locally with their communities, in addition to diversifying their services. Many institutions are offering active roles to members of the community, including volunteering opportunities and community consultations on service developments.

23. Libraries and museums have become highly sensitive to their audiences and aware of cultural diversity in contemporary European society. By engaging visitors in dialogue, they are taking into account cultural differences. Sometimes they act as intermediaries in debate between cultural groups present in their communities. In this way, they encourage closer relationships between different communities.

24. A collection of 30 case studies from Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Spain published in 2009, illustrates a shift in the contemporary methodology of museums, as heritage institutions.<sup>14</sup> Some of the cases were devoted to helping immigrant communities to become more closely involved and familiar with the history and culture of their new home. Others offered examples of how immigrants and other minorities can use these same resources to teach their host communities something about their own culture of origin.

25. The Old Village Museum in Sirogojno in Serbia<sup>15</sup> is an open air museum or “ethno-village”. The local community is involved in the preservation and presentation of its cultural heritage (restoration of traditional houses and log-cabins, preserving local crafts and traditional ways of life in the region). They host guests with local products, homemade food, handicrafts and folk costumes.

26. Public libraries are well placed to respond to the changing communities they serve. Public library material has evolved to include literature in many languages and with material designed to appeal to new communities. With the voluntary support of members of the community, they provide language learning for new arrivals through formal and informal lessons. They also help children to learn about their parents’ language and culture.

27. San Giorgio Library, Pistoia, Italy<sup>16</sup> is a new built library, conceived as an indoor meeting place for the local community. It includes a large central atrium and café, where people can meet and spend time together in library spaces specially designed and created for adults and children alike. It is run on a small operational budget. All learning activities are delivered in partnership with the local community and academic institutions.

### **2.4. Educational activities**

28. Over recent years, libraries and museums have considerably expanded the scope of their activities as centres of education. They continue to collaborate with schools and universities but also target new audiences, such as families, including small children and elderly people. Some libraries and museums also work with hospital patients, prisoners, recent immigrants, people with learning and other disabilities and troubled teenagers. In this way, they are able to provide a vast range of educational services based on their unique resources, thus becoming centres for lifelong learning to many audiences. Public libraries and museums have in some cases redesigned their space to incorporate new educational facilities, such as *makerlabs*,<sup>17</sup> recording studios and other learning resources that provide ways in which people can extend their knowledge and skills.

29. Opened in April 2012, the Maritime Culture Centre (MCC) is the latest department of the National Maritime Museum of Gdansk in Poland<sup>18</sup>. It promotes information on maritime subjects in a comprehensive and interactive way by employing multimedia techniques. Educational activities include conservation and underwater archaeology workshops. As a result, visitors are fully involved in the day-to-day activities of the museum. Emphasis is given to making access to culture easier for people with disabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> The publication is based on the outcomes of the Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue (MAP for ID) project (2007–2009); Bodo, S., Gibbs, K. and Sani, M. (eds.) (2009): *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue: selected practices from Europe*. Project MAP for ID. (114 pp.). See also: [http://www.mapforid.it/Handbook\\_MAPforID\\_EN.pdf](http://www.mapforid.it/Handbook_MAPforID_EN.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sirogojno.rs/en/pocetna>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sangiorgio.comune.pistoia.it/>

<sup>17</sup> Makerlabs is a makerspace that gives people the tools, skills, and space to bring ideas to life.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.en.nmm.pl/>

30. MUSE, the Science Museum in Trento Italy<sup>19</sup>, represents innovation and creativity in all its functions. The museum interprets the themes of evolution, environment, biodiversity and research using modern communication methods and cross-disciplinary activities. Its educational activities promote an entertaining and informal encounter with science and its applications.

31. Frysklab is a Fabrication Laboratory (FabLab) provided by Fryslân Public Library in the Netherlands<sup>20</sup>. This library has implemented a mobile FabLab; a truck full of scientific, technological and innovative tools, to teach children in the rural province of Friesland the basics of science.

32. Kista Library in Stockholm in Sweden<sup>21</sup> focuses on lifelong learning through formal and informal education. The library provides ICT classes and language cafés for seniors but also promotes dialogue between generations; sharing of experiences, knowledge and skills.

33. In the UK nearly 840,000 children participated in the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge over the 2014 summer holidays, an educational initiative designed to maintain children's reading standards over the long summer break.

## **2.5. Economic contribution of libraries and museums**

34. Libraries and museums are often considered an attraction for visitors to the city or region thus contributing to the development of the tourist economy. Generally, they can be instrumental in creating jobs, attracting businesses and encouraging the overall investment climate. Museums can have a direct and indirect influence on spending and employment in the region. Therefore public funding in this sector can be regarded not as avoidable spending but as an investment that can generate return in a form of social benefits and economic growth.

35. The Guggenheim Museum<sup>22</sup> helped to transform the city of Bilbao into a cultural landmark. Thanks to this architectural and artistic project, 45 000 jobs have been created in the region. Another great national museum offers interesting examples of the scale of economic impact that can be achieved. In 2014, the European University in St. Petersburg carried out research into the economic and social impact of the State Hermitage in the city.<sup>23</sup> This research estimated the museum's annual direct and indirect economic impact on the city economy at \$1.1 billion per annum, which is about 10 times more than the annual running costs of the museum.

36. It is important to note that libraries and museums act as a catalyst to stimulate positive changes which cause the regional economy to grow. The Museums of Hrvatsko zagorje<sup>24</sup> form a legal entity of five museums of the Krapina-Zagorje County in Croatia. The museums attract an important cultural and tourist activity to the region and also have a strong impact on the local economy. However, the benefits of such cooperation and partnerships usually go elsewhere. In response, the UK Association of Independent Museums offers to their members a special Toolkit designed to estimate their economic impact in the region. The Toolkit is structured in three levels, including tourism impacts, employment impacts and impacts of spending on goods and services. Data collected with the aid of the Toolkit can be used by museums in their advocacy work at local and regional levels.<sup>25</sup> There are also examples of this in the library sector.<sup>26</sup>

37. There are many examples where libraries and local government work closely together to the benefit of both. When Umeå was selected to be the 2014 European Capital of Culture, the municipality had decided to create the Väven Cultural Center<sup>27</sup>. The city library is at the heart of this project and is surrounded by two hotels, restaurants and cafés. It became a tourist and cultural hub in the city.

38. Another example, Warwickshire libraries<sup>28</sup> provide services for approximately 5.5 million people living in towns and villages across an area of 760 square miles. They are branded "Warwickshire Direct" as part of

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.muse.it/en>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.frysklab.nl/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://biblioteket.stockholm.se/bibliotek/kista-bibliotek>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591708-if-you-build-it-will-they-come-bilbao-effect>

<sup>23</sup> <http://eu.spb.ru/index/news-archive/2014/14470-250>.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.mkn.mhz.hr/en/about-us/organisation-of-museum/>

<sup>25</sup> DC Research (2010): *The Economic Value of Independent Museum Sector*, London. (46 pp.) <http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/downloads/2cef984a-dd70-11e1-bdfc-001999b209eb.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> [http://almak.org/working-together/our\\_activity/economic-impacts/](http://almak.org/working-together/our_activity/economic-impacts/)

<sup>27</sup> <http://slq.nu/?article=volume-47-no-3-2014-9>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries>

the council's policy towards "one front door", providing seamless local services under one roof. This partnership has allowed sharing of premises, overheads and even staff for a more cost-effective service delivery and customer convenience. The libraries provide commissioned services for a range of partners including police, health and education services, and other councils. In Warwick, people can borrow or return a book, register a birth, apply for welfare benefits or concessionary travel, post a parcel, or book a wedding – all in one place.

## **2.6. Traditional roles**

39. While actively exploring new possibilities, libraries and museums also have to continue with their traditional roles. Preserving and expanding their collections is still a crucial task, although this field has also been subject to change. On the one hand, new technology now offers highly efficient tools for storing and researching information, equipping storerooms and conserving objects and books. The rapidly changing environment makes many traditional methods of collecting difficult to apply. Libraries are reshaping their collections to include digital resources; museums are facing the problem of contemporary collecting, having to decide what and according to which criteria they should select and preserve for posterity. Further expansion of the notion of cultural heritage, which now includes intangible heritage<sup>29</sup> and digital heritage, opens new opportunities for libraries and museums. This also demands radical changes in the methodology of collecting and documenting. Careful planning using modern technology will be needed by libraries and museums when dealing with the growing number of digitised items in their institutions.

40. Normally, only a small part of a museum's collections are displayed, the rest stays in storage. That is why many European museums have taken the "open storage" approach, providing public access to the formerly closed spaces in the museum. Some museums install plasma screens or windows providing a view for the visitor of storerooms and conservation laboratories. Others organise guided tours to areas where the visitors can see the work that curators do "behind the scenes." In the Museum of Madinat-al-Zahra in Cordoba, Spain, built next to the remains of the 10 century medieval Muslim city, currently being excavated, visitors can look through a glass wall into a vast storage space and see how archaeologists clean and conserve their recent finds.

41. Another example is the Madeira Whale Museum in Portugal<sup>30</sup> where biological scientific research is carried out by its own scientific team. The continuous process of research, collecting, cataloguing, enables the museum to show visitors a wider collection of objects and to point out the ecological issues of whale hunting.

## **3. Economic pressures and challenges for libraries and museums**

42. Over the last few years, the entire cultural sector, including libraries and museums, has been seriously affected by economic austerity in Europe. Many institutions have faced reductions in public funding, due to this pressure, there have been reductions in staffing and opening hours. Also sites have been reduced or closed.

43. Libraries and museums have become an early target. Decision-makers on all levels can argue that cultural institutions are not a priority. Recently a European heritage alliance has been established led by Europa Nostra. This alliance has brought together many different organisations whose aim is to prove the value of heritage for the future development of Europe. The EU funded project "Cultural Heritage for Europe" presents convincing arguments for persuading policy and decision-makers of the impact and multiple benefits of investing in European cultural heritage.

### **3.1. Shrinking public service**

44. Small municipal institutions serving the population of remote and economically underdeveloped areas can be badly affected by budget cuts. Closure of such institutions which serve as meeting places for the local people is damaging not only to heritage and education but also to the social climate, local pride and communities' sense of identity. It is also important that libraries and museums remain safe places for people to meet and interact in times of economic or political instability.

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<sup>29</sup> See: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>).

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.madeira-island.com/museums/whale\\_museum/whale\\_museum.html](http://www.madeira-island.com/museums/whale_museum/whale_museum.html)

### **3.2. Vulnerability of collections**

45. The need to preserve, conserve, research, expand and interpret collections that embed knowledge and memory of the society provides a huge workload for libraries and museums. Some institutions tend to spend their scarce resources on the maintenance, conservation and storage of their collections. Other institutions are so short of funds that they are unable to maintain even minimum standards. It has also been known for valuable parts of collections to be sold, thus depriving their communities of the legacy of past generations and an important asset in promoting the city or region.

46. Some countries have complicated legislation covering technical standards for collections that are difficult to implement. For example in Croatia, as well as the national Museum Law, there are also by-laws regulating the care and management of collections.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.3. Maintaining premises**

47. Many institutions have to spend a high proportion of their revenue on the maintenance of their buildings, some of which may even be redundant. This leaves few resources for the development of their activities. A proper balance between maintenance and operational costs could be achieved through the efficient use of space, creation of multi-functional zones, development of collaborative projects and adjusting opening hours.

### **3.4. Staffing implications**

48. One of the consequences of economic austerity in Europe has been reductions in staff and their salaries in libraries and museums. Many professionals have had to resign from their jobs or switch to part-time positions. As in many other areas, graduates and young professionals have difficulty in finding jobs in the sector and can only get professional work experience as volunteers.

49. There has been an increase in the number of volunteers working in the sector. While it can mean a saving on staff salaries, there is a cost in recruiting, training and supervising volunteers. Also they do not replace the expertise of professional staff, which is important to ensure the scope of service that the sector provides. Some public libraries are now being staffed only by volunteers. In some instances this has resulted in a much more limited service, reducing the library to book sharing and borrowing rather than a public library service.

### **3.5. Government policy in times of austerity**

50. A policy of centralisation has always existed in some European countries. However in recent years this policy has been introduced in other countries in order to create savings. This can extend to separate institutions merging into one legal entity, which while making savings in administration, can lead to an inflexible management structure. The result can be the inability of libraries and museums to directly manage their staff and budgets, develop partnership projects, directly receive money from sponsors, quote entrance ticket prices and make concessions.

### **3.6. Hopeful signs**

51. European libraries and museums are now better prepared to face the crisis created by shortage of funds than they would have been twenty or thirty years ago. When similar events occurred in the cultural sector in the countries of both Western and Eastern Europe in the '80s–90s, public funding was the only source of support for most libraries and museums, so budget cuts had been highly damaging. However, that crisis made cultural institutions stronger: in attempting to overcome it, they improved their management, reached out to new audiences and, most importantly, learned to diversify sources of funding.

52. In a recent survey the UK Museums Association<sup>32</sup> indicates that many of their respondents believe that the quality of service provided by their museum will increase over the next year. This is a higher level of confidence than reported in any previous survey. Also, they are going to achieve a higher quality of service by an increased focus on new ways of working.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.min-kulture.hr>.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/funding-cuts/cuts-survey>.

#### 4. The Future: making libraries and museums resilient and sustainable

*"Twenty years ago museums were not in such a good shape during the last major round of cuts. Now they are better led, better managed and determined to keep museums open. They have to raise more money and it may be some museums survive because they have learned to diversify their income."*

*Mark Taylor, former Director, Museums Association, UK<sup>33</sup>*

53. Financial insecurity can actually have the effect of stimulating effectiveness, efficiency and economy in resource management and the ability to generate additional income, thus leading to increased resilience in response to new and expanding roles.

54. It is important that institutions, while remaining accountable for public funding, can preserve their entitlement to raise and allocate financial resources and hence a certain autonomy in decision making. They are in a better position to develop their own strategy and manage available resources. They can look for better solutions in financial and staff management, engage in new partnerships, benefit from sponsorship including in-kind contributions, reach for new audiences, offer new services, work with volunteers and develop outreach and community projects.

##### **4.1. Leadership, vision and skills**

55. Leadership and vision are essential for libraries and museums to be able to adjust and develop in times of change. They must be free to give rein to innovation, imagination and enterprise.

56. This requires a new style of leadership. Previously, an institution's directors tended to be professionals in a particular academic field. Today they must have additional qualities necessary to formulate the institution's mission, to develop and implement its strategy and to manage available resources. They need to be aware of a much broader picture than their predecessors were. They also need to consider cultural, social, economic and political dimensions of the institution's performance; and at the same time be capable of addressing the institutions' various stakeholders, inspiring them with their vision and securing their support.

57. Consequently, library and museum professional teams are facing a number of challenges which mean that, alongside traditional skills, an array of newly emerging skills have become necessary. Involving and giving key roles to young professionals will facilitate change. Familiar with contemporary management and communication, young specialists can complement the older members of the staff. Such teamwork, combined with advanced professional training, can transform the institution's performance while bringing it up-to-date.

58. As the result of a sharp drop in visitors in 1998, Tower Hamlets (one of the most deprived London Boroughs) developed a strategy to improve the quality of local library services. After two years of close collaboration with the Local Authority and public involvement, a new concept "the Idea Store"<sup>34</sup> was born. The concept is based on widening participation in the library and in lifelong learning, as well as access to information. Five local libraries have been successfully redesigned with a whole range of new services, including council services. Over 800 courses for adults and families were introduced. The libraries were relocated in shopping centres, functioning like a store with extended opening hours (71 hours a week, about 357 days a year). Strong emphasis was given to staff recruitment. Job descriptions have been redefined and a flat hierarchical structure introduced. Staff are now engaged with the public and act as facilitators rather than custodians of book collections. They are versatile and creative, have strong motivation and broadly reflect the diversity of the local community. Staff recruitment and in house training was the key to success. The number of annual visits has risen from 550 000 in 1998 to over 2.1 million today.

59. Another example, Aarhus Library in Denmark<sup>35</sup> has been at the centre of public service innovation in the local community. Library staff is encouraged to offer new service ideas to senior management. If selected, their idea is given a small amount of funding, to which they need to match additional funding. For example, one such idea was to develop a 'Digital ABC' curriculum through partnership between libraries and schools across Denmark, in order to improve young people's digital literacy and awareness of online safety.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/culture-cuts-blog/2012/jul/02/half-museum-budgets-cut-year>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ideastore.co.uk/about-us>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.aakb.dk/english/about-aarhus-public-libraries-0>

60. National and European networks of libraries and museums have an important role in supporting professional staff in the process of change.

61. For example, the Finnish Museums Association offers a wide range of educational services to the employees of its 385 member institutions. Over the past few years, the Association focused its programmes on training museum staff in the skills needed in the modern information society. The Association regularly organises eLearning courses, with some 20 training sessions arranged each year.<sup>36</sup>

62. At European level, one of the most successful network projects for professionals in the museum field has been *The Learning Museum Network* (LEM) operating since 2010. Its aim is to explore how museums are “learning from the communities, from the public, from their stakeholders, and also from other agencies with whom they build alliances, to accomplish the ambitious objectives set by policies at national and European level and meet the challenges of the future decades”.<sup>37</sup>

63. In addition, volunteer programmes led by professional staff have become an important and valuable way of sustaining libraries and museums. Use of volunteers, while saving on operational costs, helps to embed the institution in the community. Volunteers will value the institution and be ready to support and promote it in the community. However, European countries have very different traditions and legislation concerning volunteers’ participation in the work of cultural institutions. For more information on “Volunteers in museums and cultural heritage” see footnote.<sup>38</sup>

64. A rather unusual example of volunteering is the Saurer Museum in Switzerland<sup>39</sup> which used to be a vehicle factory that closed in 1987. After losing their jobs, a dedicated group of former workers decided to save this heritage factory by transforming it into a museum. A fundraising campaign pooled over 400.000 euros and the new museum opened in 2010. The museum is entirely run by volunteers, former factory workers.

#### 4.2. Expanding sources of funding

65. Libraries and Museums are publicly funded bodies accountable to their public funders. Therefore they have a dual accountability to the State and to all other non-public sources of income. In many European countries public libraries and museums have relied entirely on state funding. For some time now there has been a movement away from reliance on public funds and towards independent sources of income. However, some institutions fear that as their self-generated income grows their public funds will be reduced.

66. There are many ways of generating income to complement public funding. Some are traditional and can be built on; there are many that are new. For some the potential has already existed, for others there are new opportunities resulting from advanced technology and also from the contribution of enthusiastic entrepreneurs. The advent of digital technology has created many opportunities for generating income and making economies in expenditure. Digital developments have enabled museums to reach audiences in a number of ways. Online giving is an important part of fundraising. For example crowdfunding uses social media and other digital communications to share in fundraising campaigns which will fund creative projects. Building a crowd of supporters is as important as raising the funds.

67. The Bowes Museum United Kingdom launched a crowdfunding campaign which raised £21,000 in 61 days<sup>40</sup>. This has allowed the museum to restore and place back in the galleries a C15 Flemish Altarpiece. Earlier in 2014 the museum had used a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign to install a Gavin Turk neon light display on the façade of the museum<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.museoliitto.fi/en.php?k=9064>.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ne-mo.org/about-us/the-lem-network.html>.

For this purpose LEM has created working groups that prepared reports on the following themes: New trends in the museums in the 21st century; Museums and the ageing population; Audience research, learning styles and visitor relation management; Learning facilities and learning spaces in museums; and Intercultural dialogue. LEM has also established a mobility scheme facilitating study and job-shadowing trips for the European museum professionals who want to study best practice amongst their peers.

<sup>38</sup> For more information see: *Volunteers in museums and cultural heritage: a European handbook* / edited by Cristina Da Milano, Kirsten Gibbs and Margherita Sani. – Ljubljana: Slovenian Museum Association, 2009, [http://www.amitie.it/voch/VoCH\\_Final\\_Publication\\_EN.pdf](http://www.amitie.it/voch/VoCH_Final_Publication_EN.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.saurermuseum.ch/attachments/article/113/BestInHeritage2015\\_3.pdf](http://www.saurermuseum.ch/attachments/article/113/BestInHeritage2015_3.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.artfund.org/assets/supporting-museums/art-happens-resources/case-studies/Art%20Happens%20Case%20Studies\\_The%20Bowes%20Museum-1.pdf](http://www.artfund.org/assets/supporting-museums/art-happens-resources/case-studies/Art%20Happens%20Case%20Studies_The%20Bowes%20Museum-1.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/296095267/gavin-turk-high-lights-the-worlds-population-in-ne/description>

68. The Staffordshire Hoard acquisition fund raising is an interesting example of institutional and crowd funding<sup>42</sup>. After the hoard was declared national treasure and valued at about £3 million, an international fundraising campaign to save the hoard was mounted by the Art Fund on behalf of local, regional and national partners. The Art Fund kick-started the campaign with an initial grant of £300,000 and led on the public giving campaign. This allowed to raise contributions towards the acquisition, display, care, conservation and research, and also towards innovative learning and outreach programmes. As a result, the Staffordshire Hoard has been restored and kept in the area where it was originally discovered.

69. In 2012, the Libraries of the County of Suffolk<sup>43</sup> suffered from cuts in council funding. To save the libraries from closure an Industrial and Provident Society was created in August 2012. This new structure is an independent body formed as a cooperative with grass roots governance and professional management. The Society has a contract with Suffolk County Council to deliver its statutory library duties, providing more for less, with a smaller budget, but greater freedom to be creative and innovative.

70. The commercial potential of libraries' and museums' assets can increasingly be tapped for income. Even the familiar practices such as entrance charges, subscription charges for certain services and guided tours can be developed. Cafes and shops can expand their appeal by offering more attractive food and drink, and displaying imaginatively designed merchandise based on their collections. There are many more ways of putting assets to good use. For example, providing educational and information services - some institutions receive income from training courses designed for the interested layman. They also hire out space for functions, offer subscriptions to recording studios, etc.

71. Philanthropy is an important source of income. Approaching the corporate sector, private sector and charities requires good entrepreneurial and negotiating skills by staff. The interests of cultural institutions and the expectations of their partners need to be compatible. However, it should be remembered that a cultural institution should not be diverted from its mission, sacrifice its integrity or quality of its products or services for the sake of such collaboration.

72. In response to 50% cuts in public funding over 6 years, the Devon libraries developed a new concept of enterprising library service, in order to bring in new audiences, stronger partnerships and more diverse sources of income. A close partnership was established with the Economy and Enterprise service of the council, focusing on digital inclusion, work hubs (incubation spaces), and business advice and information. Partnerships with the private sector have been forged. For example, the first Fab Lab was created in the Exeter library to support pre start-ups and help people explore their potential in enterprise and job creation<sup>44</sup>.

73. Sponsorship and in-kind contribution can be of great financial support and make exhibitions and other more permanent projects possible. However libraries tend to be less attractive to sponsors as their work is mostly under the radar of press and publicity. Libraries are entering into contracts with local authorities and delivering many of their services which fall within the library's scope. Sponsorship can also be driven by corporate social responsibility whereby a company assists in creating a cultural environment for its employees and for the local community in the area where it operates.

74. Museums have an opportunity to use their collections wisely and improve standards of management. They have inalienable collections and many of historic importance to the local population which will always attract people to museums. However, museums will have to rationalise their collections and decide what to do with objects they may not wish to keep in store. The policy of deaccessioning helps them to improve the quality and relevance of their collections. After an object has been deaccessioned, disposal may occur by sale, exchange, or gift, or any other method decided by the museum. Care needs to be taken to ensure that unscrupulous public funders do not "asset-strip" from museums' storerooms.

75. Partnerships can relate to economies of scale, sharing expertise etc. For example in Finland, it is quite common for several museums to share a building thus reducing the maintenance costs and saving on infrastructure and staff. One of the recent examples is the WeeGee cultural centre in Tapiola, Espoo, based in the converted building of a former printing factory and housing five museums. The central administration maintains the building, which allows the museums to have fewer staff and share in running a shop and cafeteria; otherwise they retain their independence. Consortia can also be created to negotiate deals in areas like energy, transport, and storage.

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/partners>

<sup>43</sup> <http://suffolklibraries.co.uk/about>; [http://www.solace.org.uk/Suffolk\\_Libraries\\_a\\_social\\_enterprise\\_solution.pdf](http://www.solace.org.uk/Suffolk_Libraries_a_social_enterprise_solution.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.fablabdevon.org/about-2/>

### 4.3. Developing partnerships and networks

76. Partnerships, within and outside the sector, enable libraries and museums to reach objectives on a scale that they cannot achieve on their own. In many European cities and regions, museums develop joint projects, such as temporary exhibitions, but also engage together in marketing or construction of storage facilities. For example, ten museums located in the city of Utrecht, The Netherlands, have developed a joint marketing programme.<sup>45</sup>

77. At the local level, libraries and museums can work together, as well as with other cultural institutions, such as theatres and cinemas, but they can also collaborate with the media, educational institutions, and business enterprises. Partners from outside the sector bring additional knowledge and resources enhancing quality and scale of the projects.

78. Thus, Chekhov Museum in Melikhovo, Russia, housed on the estate near Moscow where the writer lived and worked, has become a venue for the international Chekhov theatre festival and a meeting place for theatre people. In collaboration with the regional health service, the museum has recreated a surgery where Chekhov, being also a doctor of medicine, received patients from the nearby villages; a contemporary doctor receives local patients there now.

79. The Portimao Museum<sup>46</sup>, a local museum in Portugal and winner of the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 2010, has established a rather unusual win-win partnership with the Ministry of Defence of Portugal since 2014. By organising awareness raising events and initial recruitment contacts for young people in the museum rather than in army barracks, the Ministry relates the army through the region's identity, its cultural heritage and future development.

80. In cooperation with the Department of Health, the museum of Liverpool has developed an innovative and award winning programme for people living with dementia. House of Memories<sup>47</sup> is centred on the fantastic objects, archives and stories at the Museum of Liverpool and is delivered with a lively interpretation. The activities include borrowing memory suitcases, going on memory walks, and sharing memories between generations. The programme demonstrates how a museum (or another cultural institution such as library, arts centre, or theatre) can provide the health and social care sector with practical skills and knowledge to support vulnerable people and help them access untapped cultural resources.

81. As an alternative to a legal merger between cultural institutions, the BiMus<sup>48</sup> in Roskilde, Denmark, offers a new form of cooperation between Archives, Library, and Museum, sharing a common board of directors, staff and finances. The partnership started at the management level considering common purposes, combined resources, and strengths of each institution. In time it fully involved staff who now generate together new ideas and projects. The communication departments developed a monthly newspaper for all staff to build synergies between institutions. It was essential to create an opportunity for all staff to comment frequently on the partnership, helping to secure a positive momentum. The result was an improved quality of cultural services, events and experiences for visitors.

82. When national, regional and local libraries and museums work together this can be of benefit to smaller institutions. It can include sharing of collections through digital technology and exchange of information on subjects such as advocacy and professional training. The Netherlands Museums Association in cooperation with the Association of National Museums produced a report, *Tried-and-tested partnerships* (2013), on the lessons learned about inter-museum cooperation in the Netherlands.<sup>49</sup>

83. Museums and libraries also have access to European and wider international networks. Examples of these networks are given in the footnote.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.museautrecht.nl/en/info/fancy-a-day-trip.html>.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.museudeportimao.pt/en/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/index.aspx>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.roskildebib.dk/web/arena/internationals>

<sup>49</sup> The English version of the report was published by NEMO in 2014. See: [http://www.nemo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/statements\\_and\\_news/Tried-And\\_Tested\\_Partnership\\_-\\_Web\\_Version\\_01.pdf](http://www.nemo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/statements_and_news/Tried-And_Tested_Partnership_-_Web_Version_01.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> In the case of museums, these include the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)<sup>50</sup>, European Museum Forum (EMF)<sup>50</sup>, and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). In the libraries field, connection with the international professional community goes through the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA). There are also a number of informal international library networks that extend outside of the European Union, for example the International Next Library conference which allows delegates to participate in person or online.

#### 4.4. Making the most of digital technology and creative media

84. Digital technology is having a profound influence on how libraries and museums maintain their collections and provide their services. The World Wide Web gives access through the internet to all those able to use it. In addition to affecting the delivery of services, libraries offer training to support their community members in learning to access information on the Internet.

85. The museum sector has embraced digital technologies in the recording and preservation of collections. They are also used to display and interpret collections. Many libraries and museums participate in the Europeana project, digitising collections and making them available for research via the Europeana portal.<sup>51</sup> However, only 10% of Europe's cultural heritage is currently digitised, including assets with intangible value. Since very large numbers of artefacts need to be digitised in a proper way according to the agreed standards at national and international level, this process requires additional human resources and financing. In response, many countries have established national agencies whose main tasks are to plan and implement digitisation projects in museums, and to manage electronic records.

86. Implementing the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Digitisation Strategy, the Museum board of the Ministry of Culture recommended establishing the Lithuanian Museums' Centre for Information, Digitisation and LIMIS<sup>52</sup>. The Centre was established in 2009 as a branch at the Lithuanian Museum of Arts which had experience with digitisation of museum objects. The Centre looks after the main portal "Lithuanian museums" and organises the digitization of Lithuanian museums' collections. It also coordinates the educational programmes for museum specialists working with digitisation.

87. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is therefore increasingly being used to provide interaction with users and visitors. For example to create virtual reality for scientific, educational and entertainment applications (apps); interactive games based on collections; translation into many languages; digital story telling; interdisciplinary research and many more uses. It must be remembered that libraries and museums provide a wide range of services to a varied audience with very different demands.

88. For example, the Riverside museum<sup>53</sup> takes advantage of the creation of a Digital and New Media Department which has established a common navigator for digital collections of the Glasgow museums<sup>54</sup>. The Riverside museum also displays 90 large touch screens panels full of images, memories and films that tell the stories behind the objects and over 20 interactive hands-on displays.

89. For several years, libraries have offered access to e-books and online resources alongside their physical book collections. For the 'born digital' population (those born post 2000), there is little distinction between 'online' and 'offline' functions, they combine the two. Developing and improving digital literacy has become very important for users of all ages. Digitisation has made it possible to develop innovative learning in libraries and museums. The provision of free Wi-Fi and access to the Internet is a fundamental part of the service provided by a modern library. It has become an essential component of library services, not only for the library itself, but also for users to connect their own equipment. It is important for public libraries to take advantage of modern technologies and join up their digital collections and activities, such as inter-library lending. However there are often institutional, legal and technical barriers to this kind of digital co-operation.

90. If libraries and museums are to be at the cutting edge of digital service delivery to their local community, they need to make sure that services are both appropriate and of high quality. In order to do this they need support and guidance to find the most cost effective ways to provide the technical infrastructure including networks, equipment and licences for content and software. Most important will be the training and development of staff. As the eCultValue project<sup>55</sup> demonstrates, it is becoming more common to leave behind custom-made, expensive and ad hoc solutions, and move towards generic platforms and applications. These can be shared among institutions regionally and nationally, where each institution can easily access and manage its own content. In the future, harmonised systems will be needed at European level.

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.europeana.eu/>.

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.emuziejai.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/StankeviciuteG\\_Cekija2.pdf](http://www.emuziejai.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/StankeviciuteG_Cekija2.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/riverside/about/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>54</sup> <http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/index.html>

<sup>55</sup> The eCultValue project produced several documents with guidelines regarding the valorisation of ICT technologies in museums, for more information see [www.eculobservatory.eu](http://www.eculobservatory.eu).

91. Substantial costs of large-scale projects expose a major problem which faces the future of European digital heritage. Research shows that data volumes are increasing at the rate of 60% per year; data storage increasing at 25% while data budgets are increasing by a mere 2%.

92. It is therefore interesting to note the progress of the sector outside Europe. For example, BiblioTech in Bexar County<sup>56</sup> is the first all-digital paperless public library in the United States. Bexar County Judge Nerlson Wolff, the visionary behind BiblioTech, wanted to accomplish two main goals: to break down the barriers to reading; and to provide service to disadvantaged people. The library opened in 2013 and is equipped with 600 e-readers, 200 enhanced e-readers pre-loaded for children, e-reader accommodation for the visually impaired, 48 desktop computer stations, 9 laptops, 40 tablets, and 4 interactive touchscreen tables. BiblioTech had over 83 000 on-site visitors in the first 10 months after it opened. Current programming includes Robotics, Coding for Kids, Music Theory using digital technology, Tiny Techolotes Story Time, Fighting the Summer Slide and technology classes in English and Spanish. The library also developed a reading programme for mothers in prison.

93. In Europe, DOKLAB<sup>57</sup> in Delft, Netherlands, has developed a new approach to delivering library services based on 'connecting people with stories'. It uses a range of new and existing technologies to enable the public to share, read and create their own stories and the stories of others.

## 5. Conclusions

94. Libraries and museums appeal to people's imagination, inspire and inform with thoughts and ideas; they preserve memory and bridge generations; they connect the past with the present and make one think about the future. Libraries and museums attract both local people and visitors from the outside; they provide not only an important public service, but they also enrich the quality of life; put places on a cultural map and add to their identity, making them recognisable. Libraries and museums are key elements in our cultural environment, which is so vital to any ambition for economic development (growth or recovery) a territory might have.

95. I therefore want to emphasise that libraries and museums should be seen in a long-term perspective. They represent the body of knowledge accumulated by humanity and are a valuable resource for generations to come. By contrast, economic austerity and decisions to reduce public funding allocated to cultural institutions are short term. Even in difficult times, libraries and museums remain places where people can broaden their knowledge and experience; where they meet and interact. They also attract inward investment and tourism. This is why the value of libraries and museums needs much stronger recognition in the media and political discourse.

96. I believe that in the future financial insecurity will actually have the effect of increasing an institution's resilience and ability to generate additional income. At the same time it will make their performance more creative and open to the contemporary needs of the society. Incidentally, the remarkable advent of digital technology is transforming communications and treatment of collections. However, this transition will not happen overnight. Leadership and vision are essential for libraries and museums to be able to adjust and develop in times of change. They also need more independence in decision-making to look for better solutions in financial and staff management, to engage in new partnerships, to benefit from corporate, charitable and individual philanthropy. Libraries and museums will need to diversify funding sources so that they can expand their activities for example to reach for new audiences, offer new services, work with volunteers and develop outreach and community projects.

97. This transition will need changes in management and professional performance. Governments and other stakeholders therefore have an important role to play to support this process of change with necessary reforms and assistance. Even in difficult economic circumstances, relationships between governments and cultural institutions should have a firm base in mutual understanding and trust. One of the principles underlying such trust is guaranteeing the institutions' freedom to take strategic decisions, to define priorities and to choose how they operate, while remaining accountable for public funding.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://bexarbibliotech.org/>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.doklab.nl/>.