



Resolution 2100 (2016)¹

The libraries and museums of Europe in times of change

Parliamentary Assembly

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 21st century, particularly as places where knowledge is created and transmitted to the population at large. However, as economic changes and rapid technological innovation have had a considerable effect, the Assembly believes that the roles and responsibilities of libraries and museums need to be reviewed creatively and strategically to respond to emerging needs.

2. While acknowledging the 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. In addition, 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 in the cultural sphere;
- 4.2. increase 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 smaller institutions is maintained as part of the wider cultural and heritage infrastructure;
- 4.5. promote the concept of leadership and allow libraries and museums sufficient autonomy to directly manage their staff and budget;
- 4.6. help 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.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 4 March 2016 (see [Doc. 13984](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Lady Diana Eccles).*



5. The Assembly also recommends that the 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. improving leadership and staffing, in particular by:
 - 5.1.1. establishing 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. developing and promoting specific training of staff to diversify their skills, to better adapt their work and methods to the changing roles of libraries and museums;
 - 5.1.3. disseminating best practice in the engagement and use of volunteers in the cultural sector, while acknowledging that volunteers cannot replace professional staff;
- 5.2. diversifying sources of funding to enable greater financial resilience of the library and museum sectors, in particular by:
 - 5.2.1. reviewing existing legal frameworks to remove barriers to developing public–private funding models;
 - 5.2.2. establishing 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. ensuring that public funding is not reduced as a result of successful fundraising from other sources;
 - 5.2.4. stimulating 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. disseminating best practices from other European countries;
- 5.3. strengthening partnerships and networks, in particular by:
 - 5.3.1. stimulating co-operation within the sector (informal networking between libraries and museums at city, regional and national levels) 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. working across sectors and also outside the cultural sector to gather new ideas in order to stimulate innovative thinking;
- 5.4. promoting the use of digital technology and creative media, in particular by:
 - 5.4.1. developing a proactive 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. fostering partnerships with digital research centres and commercial providers of digital technology; and sharing information about best practice in the use of new technologies in collection management, information sharing and service development.

6. At 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 the 47 member States of the Council of Europe, develop a collaborative approach to raising standards to support the 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 and the Council of Europe Museum Prize, the Parliamentary Assembly invites the European Museum Forum to consider awarding a special commendation to small and medium-sized 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.