



Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group on the role of Libraries

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Conference

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Legal framework of the OMC group

EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

Council Resolution on the **EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026** adopted on 29 of November 2022 defined **4 priorities** for action:

- a. Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors
- b. Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society**
- c. Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture
- d. Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of the EU external relations





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EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

In relation to the priority areas and working methods described in the Work Plan, the resolution sets out **21 actions** covering specific issues, such as:

- The working conditions of artists
- The role of culture for health and well-being
- Access to culture, cultural participation and democracy
- **The role of libraries**
- The sectors' green and digital transitions
- Culture, cultural heritage and climate change
- Quality built environment
- And international cultural relations, including Ukraine



What is an OMC group ?

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group provides a framework for **voluntary cooperation, exchange and sharing of good practices** among Member States on topics and priorities agreed in the Work Plan for Culture and allow for the development **of non-binding recommendations.**



OMC group on Building bridges – strengthen the multiple roles of libraries as access points and transmitters of cultural works, skills and European values

The creation of the OMC group falls onto Priority B of the new EU Work Plan for Culture: **Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society.**

EU Work Plan for Culture, Priority B: *“Culture, including cultural heritage, plays a crucial role in our democracies and in the lives of individuals (...). Cultural and linguistic diversity are among Europe’s key assets and, as such, must be respected and promoted, paying particular attention to lesser-used languages. (...) Cultural institutions play a vital role in **strengthening democracy** and social well-being by reaching out to the whole community, providing **affordable or free access to knowledge and information**, in full respect of intellectual property rights, enhancing **media literacy**, creating common ground for **dialogue and debate**, and thereby strengthening **social integration** and community engagement, and ultimately contributing to **combating disinformation, hate speech and fake news**. This role of cultural institutions must be further nurtured. In this regard, the current work plan pays special attention to fostering the **development of libraries**. Many libraries also provide a **peaceful and safe environment for vulnerable people**, which is currently of specific relevance with regard to the many displaced people from Ukraine and their need for physical and mental shelter.”*



OMC group on Building bridges – strengthen the multiple roles of libraries as access points and transmitters of cultural works, skills and European values

Rationale for the establishment of the group: *Libraries play a key role in Europe's **democratic, social, cultural, and educational** landscape at all levels. They make a **significant contribution to building democracy, citizen engagement and public-participation activities** across the EU, including in **rural and remote areas**, including the outermost regions.*

*They **welcome diverse groups**, develop programmes and activities reflecting current **societal challenges**, and provide **access to pluralist and reliable information** and **diverse cultural content** in safe and accessible environments. They are essential gateways to local and indigenous data, knowledge, research and culture.*

The Work Plan further defines target outputs:

- Starting a comprehensive debate and explore fields for **promoting and strengthening libraries**;
- Identifying different dimensions and **areas with potential**, and **exploring funding lines under EU programmes**;
- bringing together policy makers and library professionals;
- explore **possibilities for training** and further activities for professionals.



OMC group on Building bridges – strengthen the multiple roles of libraries as access points and transmitters of cultural works, skills and European values



The mandate

- The mandate will define the scope and the role of the OMC group, its objectives
- It will also set up the working approach and expected results (mapping of policies, existing financial support)
- The OMC mandate will be finalised in the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) on the basis of a draft mandate proposed by the Commission
- The mandate can propose that third parties, including third countries, be invited to an OMC group.

Timeline:

- April - consultation with stakeholders
- April/May - drafting of the mandate
- 26 June - presentation of the mandate at the CAC
- Adoption of the mandate

The OMC group

- Members of the OMC group (2 members per country) are **appointed by Member States**, usually from ministries of culture and national cultural institutions
- Each OMC group is responsible for appointing a chair or co-chairs at the first expert group meeting
- Depending on the topic, the OMC group might be encouraged to form **smaller focus groups** and use participatory methods
- OMC experts meet around **6 times**, a priori the meetings will take place physically.
- The Commission is responsible for organising the OMC, hosting the meetings and support logistically
- OMC group should ensure **complementarity and synergies with other relevant initiatives** under Work Plan
- OMC group may for further inspiration and input decide to **involve external experts**, such as researchers and representatives from civil society and **relevant professional networks**

Timeline:

The group starts in 1st quarter of 2024 and will last 18 months

The report of the OMC group

- Based on the findings resulting from the activities, the OMC group will provide a report, that will be published and its executive summary can be translated in a few languages
- Final Report will be drafted by the members of the group (Rapporteurs) with support of the Commission
- They will produce policy recommendations, manuals, toolkits, which can be shared and applicable in all the Member States
- The report may also contain the mapping of existing funding opportunities, training opportunities and examples of best practices.

Timeline :

End 2025/2026 (tbc)

Previous OMC groups on books, libraries, reading

Promoting reading in the digital environment, April 2016

Translators on the cover

Multilingualism & translation : report of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working group of EU Member State experts, 2022

Ongoing initiatives on the Book Sector

- ❑ **European Parliament own initiative report on the Future of the European Book Sector**

Rapporteur, Tomasz Frankowski, EPP

Draft report will be published in May 2023

First exchange of views with stakeholders, which took place in

March 2023 acknowledged the importance of strengthening libraries and their role in reading promotion and literacy.

- ❑ **Day of European Authors**- first edition celebrated on 27 March 2023

- ❑ **Creative Europe Programme** actions supporting the sector (literary translation, European Union Prize for Literature etc.)

Thank you !