EBLIDA Statement on the OMC Working Group on
"Building bridges: strengthening the multiple roles of libraries as gateways to and transmitters of cultural works, skills and European values"
(EU Council Work Plan for Culture 2023-26, 15381/22)

EBLIDA welcomes the inclusion of a Library priority Action within the European Council Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026.

Bearing in mind the diverse roles that libraries play in the member states of the EU, EBLIDA expects the OMC working group to develop a united and forward-looking European concept of librarianship. This should focus on the challenges and opportunities for libraries as public, socially inclusive and ecologically as well as economically and socially sustainable institutions. The importance of libraries as institutions that assist in the development of individuals and communities in urban neighborhoods as well as rural areas should be underlined and make way for a new understanding of library practice.

The aim of the mandate for the OMC should be a comprehensive policy guide with concrete recommendations for action, with targeted areas for funding opportunities. This includes funding opportunities for the development of libraries in rural as well as urban areas, examples of good practice in the provision of concrete competences (digital, media and sustainable) and initiatives for sustainable and climate-friendly development of libraries.

EBLIDA suggests to highlight the following:

A) Developing and implementing measurement and benchmarking tools, including statistical data and indicators, as good practices in public policy and library management;

B) Possible funding lines under EU programmes, which can facilitate the development of librarians and of the public library sector in Europe, and in particular the use of European Structural and Investment Funds by Member States;

C) Beneficial and long-term recommendations, manuals and toolkits concerning the development of sustainable development goals in and by libraries;

D) Recommendations on e-lending practices in libraries in EU Member States;

E) Suggestions concerning the optimal application of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Library legislation and policy in Europe.