

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



**RECOMMENDATION
CM/REC(2023)3 OF THE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO
MEMBER STATES ON LIBRARY
LEGISLATION AND POLICY IN
EUROPE**

APPROVED: 5 APRIL 2023

Introduction

In 2000, the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), in collaboration with the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), drafted the Council of Europe/EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe, which have been highly influential in shaping policies and inspiring library-related legislation throughout the Council of Europe member States.

In 2020, the EBLIDA Working Group LIBLEG started the revision of the Guidelines. A text was elaborated and sent to the Council of Europe, which suggested to raise the status of the Guidelines to that of a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers. A joint Council of Europe-EBLIDA Group worked on its finalisation and presented it to the CDCPP (November 2022). Some 15 member states enhanced the draft text with their comments. On 5th April 2023 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe approved the CM/Rec(2023)3 Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe.

By defining libraries as “publicly accessible institutions of a cultural, educational and social nature that serve local, academic, specialised communities and/or society at large”, the Recommendation introduces new concepts and reformulates traditional ones in the following four strands:

- A full sub-section is dedicated to “democratic participation”, which is added to “Freedom of expression and free access to information” (first section);
- Library work is framed within the European agenda 2030 on sustainable development and its related goals, and no longer in education and culture only, thus emphasizing the social dimension of libraries and their commitment towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society;
- Two new sections are added: “Global and local threats and library operations” and “Digital transformation and the expansion of Artificial Intelligence-based library networks”;
- It is recommended to strengthen e-lending in libraries by facilitating the acquisition of licences for digital books, on reasonable terms, as soon as they are published.