WP6 Policy Recommendations

ALL DIGITAL

National support structures

The Biblio Project

The Biblio (Boosting digital skills and competences for librarians in Europe) Project is funded through Erasmus+ KA2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Sector Skills Alliances.

The project addresses **the skills gap in the library sector due to digital transformation** that is changing the role of libraries and library professionals. The project targets **library professionals and unemployed people in the library sector** by enabling them to offer innovative services for users. It facilitates the acquisition of digital and transversal skills for library professionals by setting up a system for skills assessment, learning offer, validation, and recognition.

The project started with analysing the training needs and offers in the library sector. On this basis, partners identified two emerging job role profiles – Community Engagement and Communication Officer and Digital Transformation Facilitator. For each profile, a modular VET curriculum addressing EQF Level Five was designed, applying a VET methodology based on learning outcomes and on the blended learning principles. The curricula is based on a set of digital OERs (Open Educational Resources) supporting the acquisition of 40+ digital and transversal competences.

Based on the identified training contents, the partners developed:

1) A MOOC addressed to European library professionals which ran during 8 weeks in October-November, releasing 3-4 modules per week and including a weekly webinar to complement the content of the OERs and online learning platform. The course was a great success and involved 1200+ registered users!
2) A Specialization Training course (240 hrs total; 25 trainees per country), including: face-to-face (20 hrs/5 days), online learning (160 hrs), project-based learning (40 hrs) and work-based learning (165 hrs) phases.

Training is delivered via an online platform that stimulates sharing and exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices. The training has 38 modules:

- 18 modules for transversal competences (communication, entrepreneurship – mapped to EntreComp, leadership, etc.)
- 20 modules for digital skills mapped to DigComp related to application design and development, electronic resource management, data access, blockchains, text and data mining, ICT quality strategy developments, etc.

Work-based learning is based on the principle of inter-generational learning and the training programme is being tested in four piloting countries: **Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, and Latvia**.

EU level

Updates on the recognition of the librarian profession in Europe

The status of librarian and related roles has not changed since the research carried out in WP2 (). The profession remains regulated at the national level by Member States and currently 5 Member States, Iceland, Norway, and the United Kingdom have a professional recognition of the librarian profession under Directive 2005/36/EC. The recognition of qualifications remains up to Member States and subject to aptitude tests depending on each country's framework of recognition.

ESCO updates

The occupation categories under the European Skills, Competences, Occupations classification (ESCO) identified in the research for WP2 have remained unchanged for the librarianship field. As such the categories of library professionals are:

- 1349.16 Library Manager
- 2622.2 Librarian
- 3433.2 Big Data archive librarian
- 4411.1 Library Assistant

Under these categories, various skills are allocated to each role. Notably, the Big Data archive librarian focuses on digital activities linked to Big Data whereas the librarian and library assistant category focus on information needs and interaction with users. There is a notable emphasis on social skills rather than digital skills as they are expected to deal with information needs from users rather than managing digital databases. The Library Assistant category specifically identifies digital literacy and the ability to instruct library users on this as an essential skill. However, none of these are updates from the previous data identified in the WP2 research.

CEDEFOP updates

The initial research carried out in WP2 focused on job prospects for the categories library professionals fall under the ESCO classification and potential for development in these categories. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now a strong focus on post-pandemic recovery and the necessary digital skills to navigate changing workplaces. As identified above, professions identified relevant to the library sector fall under the "technical managers", "legal & social professionals", "legal & social associate professionals", and "other support clerks" and were analysed for this policy update. For technical managers, we see that the outlook is slightly below current employment levels. For professionals and associate professionals, we see that their job prospects will be above current employment levels especially in the associate professionals category. Finally, we see that for support clerks, job prospects in that category will be relatively low compared to current employment. While these indicators are broad and do not give a detailed estimate for the library sector in particular, it remains interesting to consider which categories of employment may see more growth and which skills to favour in upskilling and reskilling efforts. This research[1] from CEDEFOP follows the trend identified in the WP2 research as the legal and social category is not likely to face significant negative job prospects, however, employers and employees will need to have adequate upskilling and reskillling opportunities to navigate the change in workplaces.

---

[1] CEDEFOP (2023) "Skills Intelligence Monitor". https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/skills-intelligence

Future job prospects of Technical managers in EU27 in 2020-2030

Hover over an element

33.3   66.7

0.0   100.0

58

Technical managers

CEDEFOP
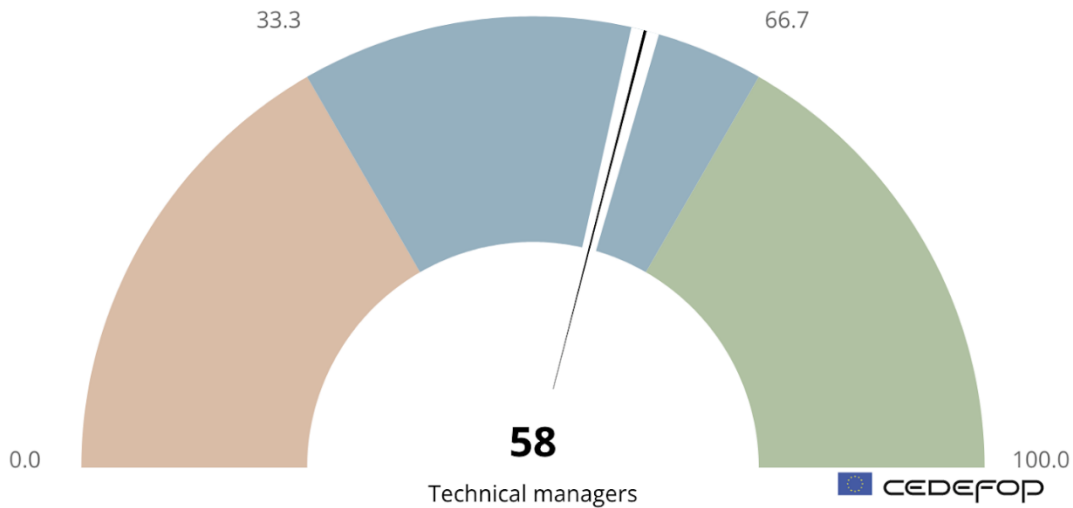
Future job prospects of Legal & social professionals in EU27 in 2020-2030

Hover over an element

33.3   66.7

0.0   100.0

68

Legal & social professionals

CEDEFOP
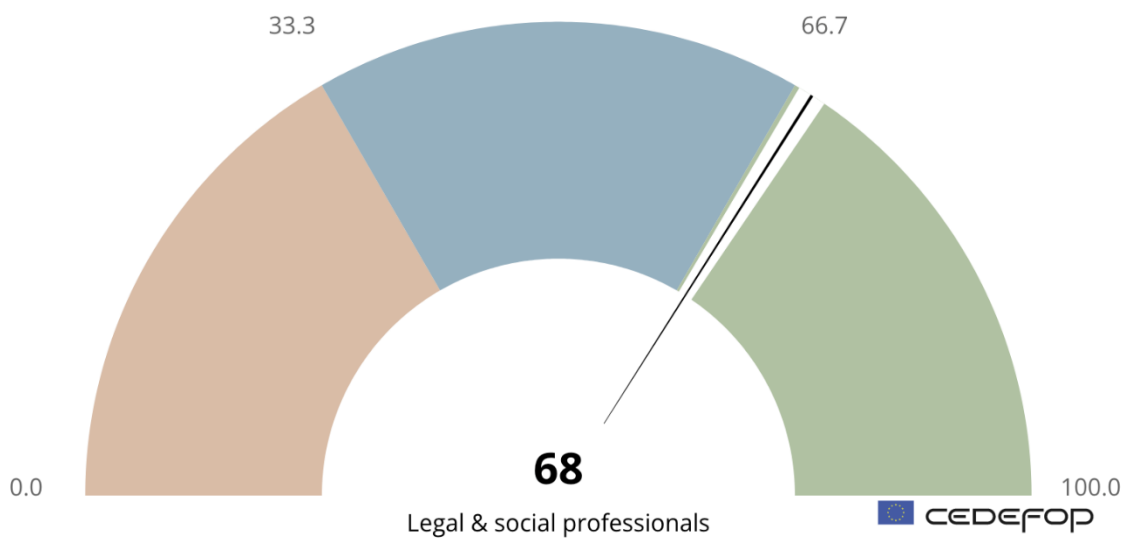
Future job prospects of Legal & social associate professionals in EU27 in 2020-2030

Hover over an element

33.3   66.7

0.0   **100**   100.0
Legal & social associate professionals

Future job prospects of Other support clerks in EU27 in 2020-2030

33.3   66.7

0.0   **0**   100.0
Other support clerks
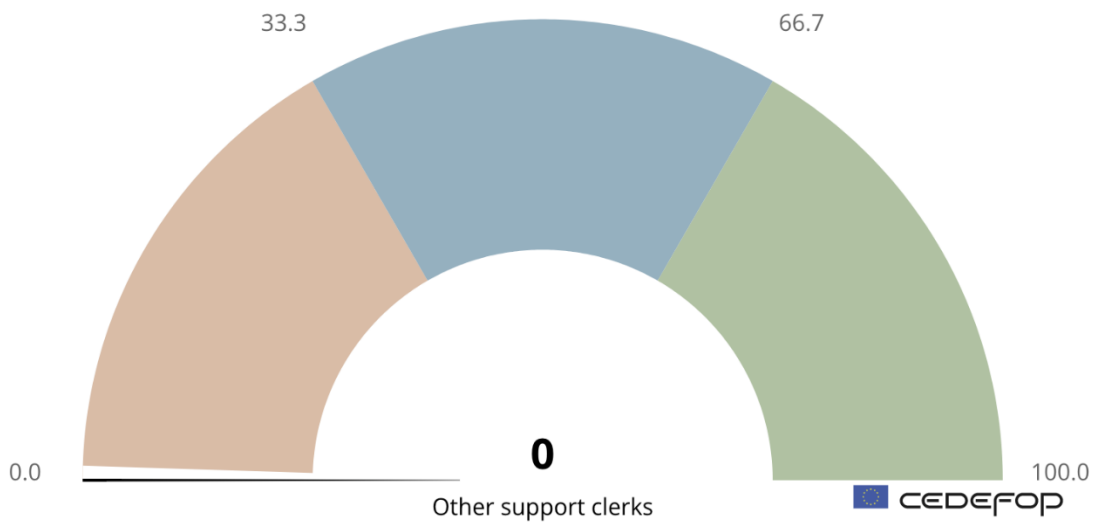
New EU policies and initiatives

Since the WP2 research, new EU policies including libraries or initiatives that could potentially include libraries have been launched.

EU Work Plan for Culture 2023 - 2026

Recently published, this document sets out actions for the public library sector under the "building bridges: strengthen the multiple roles of libraries as gateways to and transmitters of cultural works, skills and European values" of Priority B of the Work Plan. This inclusion of libraries in an EU-level document since the first Work Plans for Culture marks an opportunity for libraries and librarianship to be seen at a new level and shape a new direction for the profession in light of the work they do to support their users.

Digital Education Action Plan

The Digital Education Action Plan was adopted in 2020 shortly after the drafting of the BIBLIO skills needs report. This Action Plan aimed to make digital education a way to address the challenges and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic through two priorities focusing on specific actions. Libraries are specifically mentioned in the opening paragraphs of priority 2 as libraries participate in the partnership approach to improve computing education with Makerspaces and Fablabs.

Year of Skills

Announced in von der Leyen's 2022 State of the Union speech, 2023 will be the "Year of Skills". This brings into focus the twin transitions to ensure the EU has a workforce that is equipped with both digital and green skills relevant to a changing labour market. Furthermore, this transition aims to ensure that the digital and green transitions are socially fair and just. Information on the "Year of Skills" is still forthcoming but could be an initiative for libraries to take advantage of to upskill.

Digital Decade

The European Commission launched the Digital Decade to foster digital inclusion and ensure the challenges raised by the digital transformation are addressed in a way where no one is left behind, everyone enjoys freedom, protection and fairness. Europe's Digital Decade aims to have all EU citizens equipped with the skills and knowledge to use everyday technology and encourage businesses of all sizes to use technology to make better business decisions. As part of this initiative, the Digital Compass was developed to set out objectives in the areas of Skills, Government, Infrastructure, and Business. These areas will frame how the European Commission supports Member States and projects.

Partner countries

Bulgaria
National policies and strategies

There are no changes in the legislation compared to the research carried out in WP2.

On the basis of our broad dissemination and exploitation of the project - goals, presentation of the opportunities and benefits of the new profiles, and the results of the project activities, we notice some new trends in the national policy for development in a digital environment. We observe how libraries have become a very essential part of the projects focusing on the building of library and museum networks for access to digital resources through a single platform compatible with European digital libraries under the Recovery and Resilience Plan for the implementation period 2022-2026.

In contrast to this, the consultation of practitioners revealed little of these initiatives are perceived on their part. According to this feedback here is currently a lack of national measures for continuing education of librarians in Bulgaria, and the efforts of improving librarian skills are mainly conducted at a professional level by organizations like the Bulgarian Library and Information Association and the Global Libraries Foundation.

Accordingly, practitioners saw a need for further support measures including online training, specialized training for working with different audiences, addressing burnout and increasing motivation, and exchanging experiences between librarians and regional libraries. There is also a call to requalify librarians as pedagogical specialists, to create a national strategy, and to provide school librarians with opportunities to improve their practical skills through wider participation in events. The BIBLIO course is seen as a useful example of such training.

Librarian education and training opportunities context

In issue No. 37 of the State Gazette dated 07.05.2021, Ordinance No. 8 of April 8, 2021 of the Minister of Education and Science for the approval of the State Educational Standard (DOS) for the acquisition of a qualification by profession 322010 has already been promulgated. Librarian". Many elements of the training programs of the BIBLIO project are included in this standard.

The talks with the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAPOO) are underway to discuss the new professions (profiles) and their inclusion in the national classifier of professions and positions in the country.

Greece
National policies and strategies

During the implementation of the project, the formation of the qualifications regarding the profession of librarian in the public sector was completed. According to the PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 85 (17th December 2022). The purpose of this decree is the uniform regulation of the issue of the merit list and classification of Public Sector bodies. Graduates of library schools can be employed in economic and management positions with the following qualifications

- BRANCH: 1 ARCHIVISTS (Higher Education Graduates)

    SPECIALTY: 1. ARCHIVISTS AND LIBRARIANS, 2. LIBRARIANS

  Qualifications

    Degree or diploma in Archival and Librarianship or Librarianship or Archival, Librarianship and Museology majors in Archival or Librarianship or Archival,

Librarianship and Information Systems or Librarianship, Archival and Information Systems A.E.I. of the country or an academically equivalent or equivalent title of a corresponding specialty from schools abroad

- BRANCH: 10 MUSEOLOGISTS (Higher Education Graduates)

SPECIALTY: 1 MUSEOLOGISTS

Qualifications

Degree or diploma in Museology or Museum Pedagogical Education or Archival, Librarianship & Museology majoring in Museology A.E.I. of the country or an academically equivalent or equivalent title of a corresponding specialty from schools abroad.

These legal arrangements shielded the librarian profession and limited any problems it has suffered to date regarding the qualifications required for positions in libraries.

Librarian education and training opportunities context

The program had a great impact in Greek librarian community. There are many who wanted to join even after it started and others who would like to see it continue in a second phase. Let's not forget that there are also scientific areas that are now in their development, such as citizen science. It would be appropriate to revisit the program to incorporate individual components that were not included in the first phase. The program may not have affected the way librarians are trained in Greece to a great extent, but it did affect their will and their will to develop. It is now obvious that they demand such solutions that will be active at regular intervals. We think that it should be a constant relationship between formal and non-formal librarianship. Both of them should create opportunities via programs such as BIBLIO.

Italy

In the consultation of practitioners, the majority of participants reported that they are not aware of any particularnational support measures for the training of library and archival professions.

It was reported that the culture sector has been severely affected by the pandemic both due to the uncertainties generated by the forced closure of cultural events and venues and the alarming consequent reduction in the cultural habits of citizens. In this context, the aim is to support the recovery and innovation of the cultural and creative sectors by acting through major funding.

Other trainees mentioned:

- Training courses provided by accredited bodies and by AIB (Italian association of libraries)
- PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan – part of the Next Generation EU)
- https://www.erasmusplus.it/istruzione_superiore/partenariati-strategici-ka2-3/capacity-builduing/
- https://socialinnovationlab.fondazionecariplo.it/programma-di-capacity-building-2022

The practitioners identified further measures they feel are needed. Further training for the library sector should be a priority for cultural institutions, given the fact that this sector is lagging behind both

the international landscape and the technological advancement of other disciplines. Librarianship is a discipline that needs to continually update itself and if librarians are not adequately supported, this results in the crisis of the sector and ultimately in the standstill of library services. It was mentioned that the BIBLIO methodology should be applied to other sectors to further train future librarians and cultural workers. The experience of the BIBLIO project should be taken up by other institutions to train future librarians and cultural workers. Monitoring, mentoring and tutoring activities could be activated, together with scholarships. The dedicated training for librarians in Italy is often focused on library services and not on the entrepreneurial and/or planning skills and activities. Specific training should be provided to this end.

Latvia
National policies and strategies

Since the beginning of 2020, there have been no significant changes in library legislation and policies. At the end of 2021, the territorial division of Latvia's administrative territories and counties was changed, where instead of the previous 119 local governments, 43 municipalities started work. These changes do not have a significant impact on the work of libraries, but libraries are clearly included in the "Regional Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027" as a potential extension of the unified customer service centers of the state and municipalities, thus ensuring a large reach of the service in regions, residents with special needs or low mobility. In one of the directions of action of this document on the provision of services in the regions in accordance with demographic challenges, one of the tasks includes that the role of libraries in promoting the availability of services should be strengthened, because libraries are a suitable environment for the provision of services by the unified customer service centers of the state and municipalities. Library staff are trained on e-services and life situations.

The previous library industry strategy was for the period 2024-2020. Active work is currently underway on the development of the Library Sector Strategy for 2023-2027. The document is created with reference to the following development planning documents:

- State cultural policy guidelines "State of Culture 2022-2027",
- "Regional Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027",
- Educational Development Guidelines for 2021-2027 "Future skills for future society",
- Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society for 2021-2027
- Science, technology development and innovation guidelines for 2020-2027,
- Digital Transformation Guidelines for 2020-2027,
- National Language Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027,
- Strategy of the Literature and Book industry 2021-2027.

The main goal of the Library Sector Strategy for 2023-2027 is to develop libraries as an important resource for the smart and sustainable growth of society, which ensures the preservation and accessibility of Latvia's cultural heritage, improves public literacy and information literacy, ensures civic participation and supports cultural, educational and scientific processes, promotes the use of creative potential, social cohesion and resilience strengthening, ensures the availability of state and local government services to the public.

The strategy places great emphasis, among other things, on developing librarians' digital skills and competencies.

Digital Transformation Guidelines for 2020-2027

For more citizens to use e-government services, in 2018-2020 a wide program of communication and learning activities "My Latvia. Do digitally!" was implemented, within the framework of which 6000 state administration employees and other specialists, including librarians, were trained, with aims to improve their knowledge of digital solutions to be able to help people to use services digitally.
The guidelines state that - to ensure the opportunity to learn basic digital skills for every citizen who needs them, regardless of age, social status, and security level, it is planned to use various channels for providing digital skills, including the national library network, course programs initiated by governmental and non-governmental organizations, and other measures to learning basic digital skills would be accessible to different population groups. It is also indicated the need to provide unified authentication tools or their solutions to ensure the possibility for learners to access a wide range of digital learning content, incl. for digital library resources.

Educational Development Guidelines for 2021-2027 "Future skills for future society"

During the guidelines period more attention is planned to be paid to informing the public about the benefits and opportunities of adult education, implementing awareness raising campaigns, as well as motivating adults, incl. for reaching and motivating groups of less involved learning adults. Existing resources and networks, including library networks, will be used to provide career development support.

State Cultural Policy Guidelines "State of Culture 2022-2027"

This document describes a unified digital development policy of the state administration, economy, and society, including setting goals for the preservation and development of cultural heritage in the digital environment, as well as outlining the role of libraries in improving society's digital skills.

National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027

On July 2, 2020, the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 was approved, where in one of the priorities "Culture and sports for an active and fulfilling life" action direction "People's participation in cultural and sports activities" task no. 368 determines that library services should be developed.

Disemmination of these mearues among practioners cold be improved, as while the majority of participants reported that they are aware of the capacity-building seminars offered by the National Library, while some of the respondents noted that they are not aware of any training opportunities.

Participants noted that there are opportunities where one can find further training, but these rely on potential participants showing initiative and willingness themselves, and they aren't being actively promoted. The training offered is not only in the specific library field but covers also wider topics and is transversal.

Librarians acknowledged that due to COVID a lot of opportunities are now online and it is easier for rural territory librarians to participate in training. Some of the librarians reported that the municipality includes a specific training budget in the library's yearly budget for capacity building, but this has been noted in only specific municipalities, not as a general country-wide trend.

The most common training program mentioned:

- Latvian National Library Competence Development Center: https://macies.lnb.lv/ (if the training is completed – 90% of the costs are covered)

Librarians actively use also different training opportunities which are available free of charge but not specifically targeted towards library employees. Examples are:

- Offer from the State Education Development Agency macibaspieaugusajiem.lv,
- training from the State Employment Agency, e.g. informal education program for the target group 50+.
- Riga Tech Girls general digital skills training – "Get to know technologies"
- Digital leader training program ("Dari digitāli") by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia

The practitioners listed additional measures they would like to be offered on a ntional level. Among these, they named practical-oriented training on the latest technology that can be used on a daily basis, and they have expressed an interest in continuing participation in projects similar to BIBLIO.

The courses offered should not only be library targeted, but technology training as universal training for many professions, and in Latvia librarians often participate in courses that are not specifically designed for only librarians.

Librarians acknowledged that continuous learning is important and emphasized also the need to have training on specifically working with youth, their needs, and understanding the technologies. Some of the participants suggested that it would be useful for librarians to participate in some university courses which they feel are needed to receive more in-depth understanding, for example in troubleshooting – short courses do not cover the in-depth knowledge needed, so a possibility to take a separate university course from the IT faculty or Business faculty would bring an added value.

Support would be needed for working librarians who are willing to further their formal education studies – funding opportunities for university courses.

Librarian education and training opportunities context

Since research carried out in WP2 no changes are made in formal and non-formal librarian education sector.

In the middle of 2020, the Competence Development Center of the National Library of Latvia conducted interviews with representatives of Latvian public libraries to find out the opinions of library representatives about the new competencies of librarians, how training is provided for librarians and what are the obstacles to learning. The interviews were conducted within the framework of the

professional continuing education program "Library Knowledge" (960h). The questions of the questionnaire were formulated with the aim of establishing a meaningful and structured conversation with library representatives and obtaining the widest possible answers about the new competences of librarians. The qualitative research method was applied, in the form of an interview both in person and remotely.

Answers to the following questions were obtained:
1. Is there a need for the librarian to renew and acquire new competencies?
2. What competencies do librarians lack?
3. What new competencies do librarians need? What are the most necessary?
4. How is the acquisition of new competencies ensured for librarians?
5. What obstacles exist in improving librarians' competencies and learning new competencies?
6. What competencies are easier/difficult for librarians to acquire?
7. Do librarians resist learning new competencies?
8. What development courses do librarians need?
9. What do you think a modern librarian is like?

Digital competences, skills in using digital tools, inability to keep track of the latest technologies, insufficient management of smart devices, knowledge of innovations, making presentations were mentioned as one of the first missing competences in the interview question No. 2. The information obtained in the interviews is available in a summarized form on the Latvian library sector portal: _https://www.biblioteka.lv/bibliotekara-profesionalas-un-visparejas-kompetences-publiskajas-bibliotekas/_

The vocational education sector is currently affected by significant changes related to the restructuring of the educational content within the framework of the Vocational Education Content Reform. The goal of the reform is to create an independent, high-quality professional education system that meets the needs of the development of economic sectors, which can respond quickly to the demands of the labor market, evaluating and renewing the content of education according to the qualification structure of the sectors. One of the most important elements of the reform is the creation of modular professional education programs.
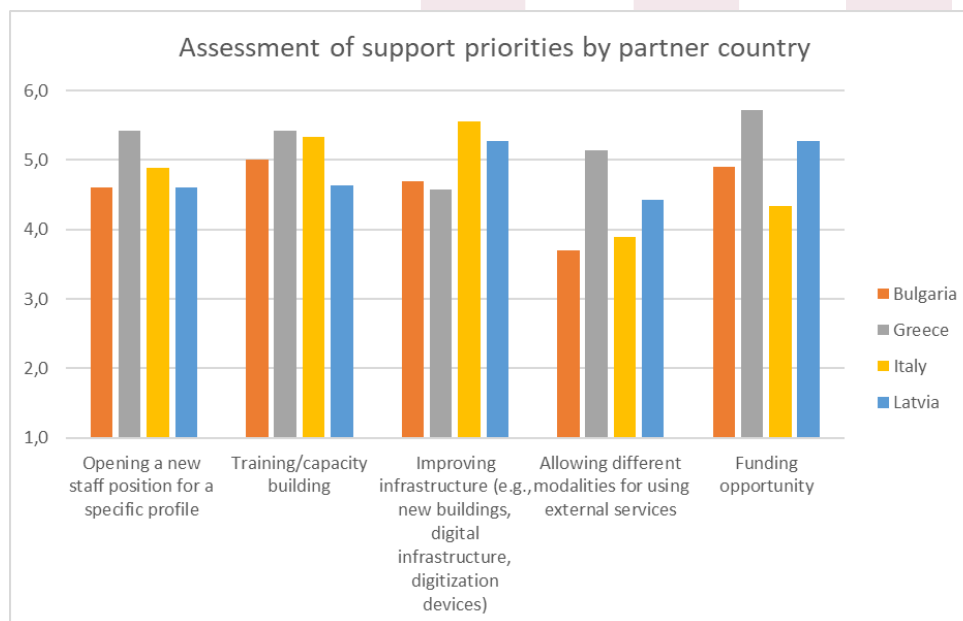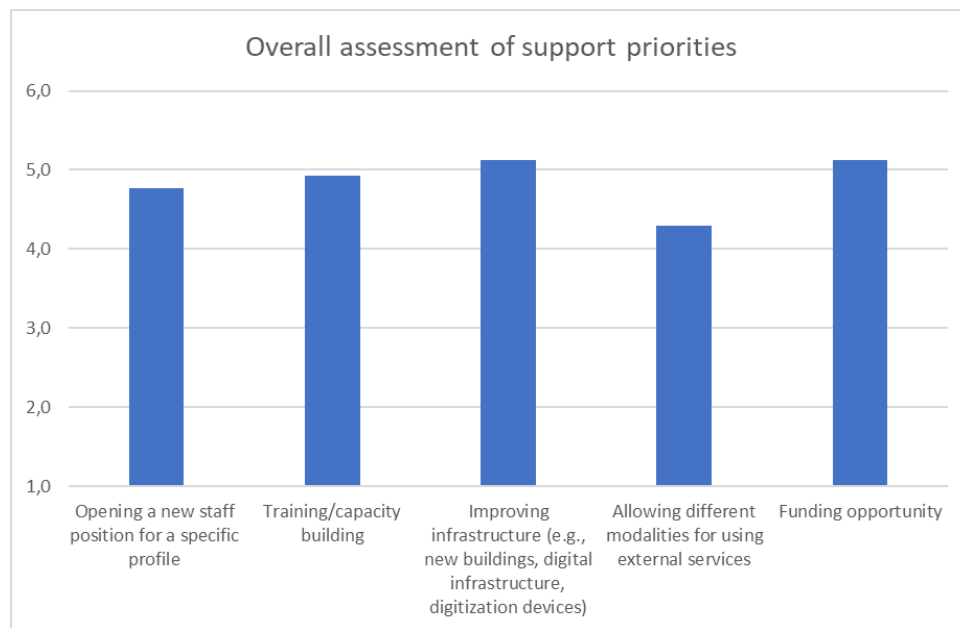
The changes also apply to the professional continuing education program "Library Knowledge" (960 h), qualification "Librarian" implemented by the Competence Development Center of the National Library of Latvia.

In 2020, the development of the modular professional continuing education program "Library Knowledge" was carried out in accordance with the framework of Latvian Qualifications Framework and the EQAVET.

Priorities for needed support from governments and local authorities

In January 2023, the BIBLIO partners planned several evaluation activities, that involved the trainees who took part in the BIBLIO Specialisation course and the library employers coming from the libraries that hosted the trainees in the implementation of the project ideas.

Such online surveys aimed to evaluate the BIBLIO course, training materials and structure; evaluate the trainee's project impact and collect information on policy recommendations

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Necessary conditions, challenges and opportunities for the digitisation of libraries

Necessary Conditions

The consultation of practitioners identified necessary conditions for the digitisation of libraries around five central clusters.

1. Infrastructure and IT
2. Staff and Personnel
3. Funding and Resources
4. Cooperation and shared practices
5. Skills and Education

Challenges

The recognised challenges around the digitalisaion process clustered around three central themes:

1. Lack of adequate investments in trained staff and appropriate equipment
2. Sustainability and long-term challenges
3. Incorporating user needs

Opportunities

However, the practitioners also named opportunities they saw connected to the digitalisation of libraries, which revolved around four main ideas:

1. Increase of popularity and reach
2. Improvements of contents and materials
3. Smarter and more cooperative work and activities
4. More efficient use of resources