

Strategic priorities for CENL for the next 4 years

Actions required:

- EC are asked to discuss the revised strategy.
- EC are asked to take a decision on the revised strategy.

In 2022 it was agreed to extend the current CENL Strategy by one year. The current strategy will therefore be in place until mid-2023. Following the workshops during the AGM in Brussels, a draft of the next CENL Strategy covering a 4-year period starting from mid-2023 – mid-2027 was discussed by the members in three groups:

The results showed, that nothing seems to be missing but that the draft should be tightened up. The CENL members felt that it is most important to discuss and define the identity of CENL more precisely. It was suggested that CENL focuses more on showing the potential for the members.

To exchange and promote the role of CENL, it was suggested to have a workshop/conference on transnational goals to improve the exchange of cross-country thinking. It was also suggested to create a dialogue platform with the Council of Europe to exchange more and promote our role. Thus, awareness for CENL could be increased.

It became also evident that the objectives of the National Libraries are not necessarily the same like those of CENL. As a consequence, CENL should not do research but rather enable its members to meet and share their experiences and best practices; and support them locally and virtually (e.g. by the funds and grants, by spreading news about its members, by supporting surveys, and by inviting to meetings locally and virtually).

The most important insight is that CENL members want to have more opportunities to meet and network, and that the staff of CENL member libraries would like to get more involved.

At the EC meeting in Frankfurt am Main in September 2022 the EC agreed that the text should be revised once again with more open wording and examples and actions removed of it.

At the Paris meeting in January 2023, the EC asked for a wording more adapted to national libraries rather than libraries in general.

The result of the revision can be found below.

CENL Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

The relevance of national libraries for society

CENL's Vision

Europe's national libraries are leading memory institutions, playing a vital role in the intellectual, educational, cultural, social and economic development of the continent, the countries and the communities they serve.

As the Conference of European National Librarians we will advocate the cause of European national libraries by supporting and advising our colleagues and staff in meeting the needs of our audiences, in preserving and developing our collections and in developing innovative services in a sustainable environment.

Together we form a strong professional community that promotes our common goals and shared values of collaboration and partnership.

CENL's Mission

CENL's mission is to advance the cause of Europe's national libraries by working better together as European national librarians and achieving more than we can do alone.

To engage with national library audiences and understand their needs

- CENL will support the further exploration of the changing environment for library users and wider audiences to understand the impact of changing collections, spaces and technologies and to help CENL members embed this knowledge into their own strategies.

To build capacity and professional expertise in CENL members

- CENL will continue to support its members to grow as organisations, to develop innovative and relevant new services and to develop highly skilled staff.
- CENL will lead the debate on the changing role of national libraries in a rapidly changing world. We will build a strong network of experts from a wide range of professional areas to share knowledge, experience and to learn from each other.

To advocate for CENL members and libraries in general

- CENL will be the leading advocate for national libraries at the European level.
- CENL will work to promote the interests of CENL member libraries and to support activities at European and national level that will help all libraries to provide better services to their communities.
- CENL will develop strategic partnerships with other organisations to promote the interests of its members.

The relevance of national libraries for society

National libraries are important not only at national level, but also for Europe as a whole: National libraries preserve Europe's cultural heritage in print and digital form.

The war in Ukraine shows how important it is to give the public access to knowledge and information. National libraries play a crucial role in providing a wide range of information sources that enable their audiences to understand, compare and evaluate this information.

While digital transformation continues to gather pace and has a significant impact on all aspects of national libraries' work, many CENL members now have mature national digital strategies in which they play a leading role.

Many CENL members' national libraries are fundamentally changing the way they operate and deliver value to their audiences. Digital transformation is a cultural change that requires members to continually challenge the status quo, to experiment, and to be comfortable with failure.

They are seeking to develop their role in civil society and to engage with a wider public audience beyond traditional researchers and students. This has stimulated widespread interest in redesigning and repurposing of physical spaces, as well as generating ideas for innovation in services and public programmes.

Many members are developing new relationships – formal and informal – with university libraries, with public libraries, with museums and archives, enabling them to take on wider responsibilities and new purposes.

This is much easier to achieve in networks and through cooperation. CENL has been and will continue to be a hub for communication and exchange, enabling and supporting its members in their activities.

The strategic plan for 2023-2027 builds on the previous strategy as a valid foundation and aims to further strengthen and support CENL members in these priority areas:

- We will support our members to develop as memory institutions for the past and for the future.
- We will continue to support our members to increase their impact and to be strong and networked organisations.
- We will continue to strengthen CENL as a community.

Priority areas for action 2023-2027

- 1. We will support our members to develop as memory institutions for the past and for the future.**
 - We will share information, identify best practices and support members to exchange ideas and experiences.
 - We will provide opportunities for discussion and debate on key issues through our annual general conference for members and other events.

- 2. We will continue to support our members to increase their impact and to be strong and networked organisations.**
 - We will provide opportunities to meet for our members and their staff.
 - We will support our members to enable them to identify and shape their own priority areas for development.
 - We will develop a CENL policy on advocacy and lobbying on behalf of CENL members in relation to wider library and information society issues such as national cultural policy.
 - We will continue to identify and partner with other relevant organisations working to promote the impact and strength of national libraries and cultural organisations.

- 3. We will continue to strengthen CENL as a community.**
 - We will keep our governance models, our work programme and ways of working under review to ensure that CENL works effectively for all its members.
 - We will ensure that CENL network groups work effectively by reviewing their remit and terms of reference.
 - We will update and improve member contacts to ensure we communicate effectively with members and also strengthen the peer-to-peer network.
 - We will develop an annual communication and consultation plan each year to ensure that all members are able to participate effectively in decision making.
 - We will continually develop the CENL website to ensure it is an effective source of information for members and anyone seeking information about Europe's national libraries.
 - We will continually develop plans for the use of social media and other media channels in support of CENL as a whole and individual member libraries.

CENL: By Members - For Members!