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WRITTEN DECLARATION

submitted under Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure

on the impact of public libraries in European communities

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Written declaration, under Rule 123 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, on the impact of public libraries in European communities¹

1. A 2013 survey of public library services across 18 European countries shows that nearly 100 million Europeans visited their public library and 14 million used it to access the internet last year;
2. In the last 12 months 24 million Europeans (most frequently elderly people, members of ethnic minorities and people from rural areas) used their public library to engage in non-formal and informal learning activities;
3. 83% of those using free public library computer and internet services reported a positive impact on their lives – saving time and money, improving skills, gaining access to government services and employment- and health-related resources;
4. Last year 1.5 million Europeans applied for jobs and 250 000 found jobs using free library internet access;
5. Public libraries represent the only source of free internet access for 1.9 million marginalised Europeans;
6. The Commission is therefore called upon to recognise the essential services that public libraries provide to local communities and disadvantaged groups in relation to digital inclusion, social inclusion, lifelong learning and pathways to employment, and the role of those services in assisting with the delivery of the EU's objectives;
7. This declaration, together with the names of the signatories, is forwarded to the Council and the Commission.

¹ In accordance with Rule 123(4) and (5) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, when the declaration is signed by a majority of Parliament's component Members, it shall be published in the minutes with the names of its signatories and forwarded to the addressees, without however binding Parliament.