



The Europe Challenge

The Europe Challenge 2024: Writing Competition – How a Library Changed My Life

Have you ever fallen in love or experienced a moment of connection, transformation, or inspiration within the walls of a library? Have you ever laughed, cried, or fallen asleep in a library? Have you stumbled upon joy, solace, or magic among the shelves? Has a library ever been the backdrop to a chapter of your life story? Would you like to tell that story?

We are now accepting written submissions under the following title: **How a Library Changed My Life**, as part of [The Europe Challenge](#) writing competition.

Libraries across Europe are not just about books; they are about life-changing moments, be they escapes from reality, places of serendipitous discoveries, or even unexpected companionships with people or stories. Whether it's a tale of romance sparked between the stacks, a burst of inspiration, or a poignant memory that clings to your heart, we want to hear it! Share your most unforgettable library experiences with us and celebrate the magic of libraries.

We welcome your written reflections in any format on the following themes, each accompanied by a guiding question to inspire your thoughts:

- Libraries as Houses for Books: How have books and stories in a library touched your life or imagination?
- Libraries as Living Rooms of 21st Century Europe: How do libraries act as essential public spaces amidst Europe's shrinking communal areas?
- Libraries as Climate Oases: Has a library ever kept you warm during harsh winter months or kept you cool during a heatwave?
- Libraries as Spaces for (Diverse) Communities: Has a library ever played a role in creating a sense of belonging and community for you?

- Libraries as Mental Health Sanctuaries: Was there ever a time when a library offered you a safe space during tough emotional times, a period of loneliness or isolation?

Submissions must be:

- Written in English.
- Max. 3,000 words in length.
- Submitted as a PDF (font size: 12, Time New Roman).
- Both fiction and non-fiction submissions are accepted, however, we especially encourage stories inspired by real libraries in Europe.
- We accept any form of written submissions - you can write an essay, a poem, a letter, a short story, or submit your writing in another creative format of your choice!

Five winners will receive:

- A cash prize of 500 EUR.
- The piece will be published in The Europe Challenge publication, which will be launched at a special event in Amsterdam in September 2024.
- The winner will receive 2 free copies of the publication.
- The winner might also have the opportunity to travel to Amsterdam to do a public reading of their winning piece at the September event and book launch and/or deliver a video reading (location and availability dependent).

NB: We reserve the right to work with the author on making minor editorial changes to the piece should that be needed before publishing.

How can I submit my written piece?

Please submit your written piece as a PDF attachment by emailing [**theeurochallenge@culturalfoundation.eu**](mailto:theeurochallenge@culturalfoundation.eu).

In the email subject line, please include ***Writing Competition Submission - The Europe Challenge***.

In the body of the email, please include the following obligatory information*:

- Name & surname
- Email address
- Phone number (please include the correct country code)
- Town/city
- Country

- If your piece is inspired by a real library, please include some information about the library that inspired your story (library name, location, etc).

*Please note this personal information will not be considered by the panel of judges and will only be used to contact you with the outcome of the competition. All written pieces will be considered by the panel anonymously.

Deadline for submissions is **20 May 2024 at 12.00 (noon) CET**. Winners will be informed via email in June 2024.

Who can participate?

No matter who you are or where you are based, everyone is welcome to submit their written piece! Please note that each individual can only participate with a single submission.

Please spread the word about this opportunity via your networks, friends, social media, or with anyone who you think would be interested in sharing their life-changing library story through this competition.

Questions?

In case of questions, please email theuropechallenge@culturalfoundation.eu.

This writing competition is organised as part of [The Europe Challenge](#).

The Europe Challenge 2024 is initiated by the [European Cultural Foundation](#) and supported by [Fondazione Cariplo](#), the [Scottish Library and Information Council](#), public funding by [Arts Council England](#), and [Deutsche Postcode Lotterrie](#) via [Deutsche Bibliotheksverband](#). The programme delivery partners are [Including Society](#), [Changency](#), [DOKK1 Aarhus Public Libraries](#), [OBA Public Libraries Amsterdam](#) and [Public Libraries 2030](#).

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