



Report of the 'Comité des Sages on Bringing Europe's cultural heritage online'

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Audiovisual Council working group

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The work of the Comité des Sages



- Appointed by Commissioners Kroes and Vassiliou in April 2010
 - Suggestion made in the EYC Council of November 2009
- Three personalities
 - M. Lévy (CEO Publicis)
 - E. Niggemann (DG German national library)
 - J. De Decker (Journalist and writer)
- Input from stakeholders:
 - Online consultation, public hearing, bilaterals
 - Meeting with Ministers and EP Culture Committee
- Technical audit Europeana by Cap Gemini + Study into the cost of digitisation



The new Renaissance



- Presented to the Commission on 10 January 2011
- Stresses the economic aspects next to the cultural aspects

The vision

- 'Access' is the central concept
- Digitisation is more than a technical option, it is a moral obligation
- Main responsibilities for digitising and preserving our cultural heritage should be assumed by the public sector



Access to and use of public domain material



The issue

- Digitised public domain material is an asset for the information society, but access and use are not guaranteed
- Status and practices differ within Member States

Key recommendations:

- Make digitised public domain material widely available for access and re-use
 - Cross-border access should be a condition for funding
 - Use of intrusive watermarks should be avoided
- Unify the rights status of digitised public domain material between the MS
- Make metadata related to the digitised objects widely and freely available for re-use



Digitisation of in-copyright material



The issue

- Risk of a 20th century black hole; digitisation of out of distribution works
- Orphan works are a barrier to mass-digitisation projects
- Rights of the creators must be respected

Key recommendations:

Adopt a European legal instrument for **orphan works** as soon as possible

- 8 key-conditions to be respected
- Future orphan works should be avoided: introduce some form of registration as a pre-condition for a full exercise of rights
- Rights holders are the first to exploit **out of distribution** works
- If they do not exploit, there should be licensing solutions and a window of opportunity for cultural organisations to digitise and make the material available online



Europeana



The issue

- Europeana is central in the strategy to bring Europe's cultural heritage online
- It should be strengthened to become the reference point for European culture online

Key recommendations :

- Financial and political efforts should be concentrated in order to reinforce Europeana as the reference point for European culture online
- Public funding for digitisation should be conditional on the subsequent free accessibility through Europeana
- By 2016 all public domain masterpieces from MS should be accessible through Europeana
- Give Europeana a key role in the preservation of digitised and born digital material
- Europeana must be actively and widely promoted at all levels

Sustainability of digitised resources



The issue

- Preservation is a key aspect in digitisation efforts and also essential for born digital material
- Cultural institutions have a key role to play in preservation
- During the planning phase of digitisation projects the cost of preserving the digital assets must be duly taken into account.

Key recommendations:

- Archive a copy of all digitised or born digital material at Europeana (dark archive for in-copyright material, open archive for public domain material)
- Envisage a system to avoid that the same content needs to be deposited in different EU countries
- Copyright legislation must enable cultural institutions to make archival copies and file conversions
- Persistent identifiers must be implemented in each digital object



Funding issues



The issue

- A rough estimate of the costs of digitising the whole European cultural heritage is 100 bn euros.
- Mass-digitisation is an industrial process, and hence very susceptible to efficiency gains due to scale.
- Digitisation represents an opportunity for new business models and growth

Key recommendations :

- The public sector has the primary responsibility for funding digitisation. Member States have to step up their investments. The current crisis cannot be ignored, but cannot be a reason for not acting
- At the same time, involvement of private partners should be encouraged
- Public funding should cover the largest part of Europeana's operational costs, also after 2013.
- Funding of digitisation and of Europeana should be seen as a package: MS pay for digitisation, EU pays for Europeana
- MS should promote ways to turn digitisation into new development opportunities for European firms

Public-private partnerships



The issue

- Private funds for digitisation are necessary, complementing public investments
- The right balance between the missions of cultural institutions and the interests of private partners must be found
- Cultural institutions often enter partnerships with commercial entities 'unprepared' and 'unequipped'

Key recommendations:

- Minimum conditions to be respected:
 - Agreements should be made public
 - Digitised public domain material should be freely accessible for the public and available in all MS
 - Cultural institutions should get the same quality files as the private partner
- Maximum time of preferential use by the private partner is 7 years
- Create favourable conditions for the involvement of European players in PPPs
 - Digitisation in areas that have not received much attention
 - For the medium term: tax incentives
 - Encourage the use of public funds matching private funds
 - Encourage Europeana to build partnerships with European businesses

Next steps



- Work with Member States on content roadmaps in the context of the MSEG on digitisation and digital preservation
- Communication on Europeana and digitisation on the Commission workprogramme 2011 (2nd quarter)
- Work on sustainable financing model for Europeana ongoing

