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Author: [Editor Connect](#) [1], published in [DAE blog](#) [2] on 02/10/2012

In March I attended the launch of PrestoCentre a non profit organisation led by five of the major audiovisual archives organisations in Europe to facilitate the digitisation and preservation of our audiovisual collections across Europe. PrestoCentre is the result of more than 10 years of collaborative work under our IST research and innovation programmes of the leading archives in Europe: Institut National de l'Audivisuel (INA - FR) , Sound and Vision (Beeld en Geluid - NL), BBC (UK), RAI (IT) and ORF (A).

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--- *Posted by Javier Hernández-Ros, DG INFSO, Head of unit: Cultural Heritage and Technology Enhanced Learning*

Last week, DG INFSO has made the [Second progress report on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and on digital preservation in the European Union](#) [3] publicly available, providing a useful overview of both projects and issues in European digitisation.

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PrestoCentre will be offering expert services to the community of audiovisual archives across Europe, covering legal, organisational and technological issues. The founders of PrestoCentre have invested millions of euros in developing tools and technologies for digitising and preserving their collections and have now taken a crucial step to share their knowledge with others and ensure sustainability of their joint work after the Community grants stop. Good news!

PrestoCentre is a nice example of European cooperation for preserving and making available our cultural heritage. INFSO has been fundamental and have accompanied for many years these institutions in building up their skills and technologies in partnership with ICT vendors.

But this is just the start. The road ahead is exciting and challenging. Within two years the ICT research grant will be over and PrestoCentre will have to fly alone. They have two years ahead to consolidate their organisation, develop their services, build their client base, expand their membership and last, but not least, secure the necessary financing.

I'm confident that the organisations will succeed in all these endeavours.

The event took place in the framework of a [conference on digitisation and digital preservation organised in the premises of Sound and Vision](#) [10], the Dutch audiovisual archives, in their wonderful premises of Hilversum. I was impressed by the very nice architecture of their building, its beautiful atrium and an outstanding theatre. Congratulations to the architects and managers of Sound and vision and all the best to PrestoCentre!

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