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Lund Action Plan

Progress up to 2003 - Planning for 2004

Progress Update: 31 December 2003

Covering time: Jan-Dec 2004

Revision time: mid 2004

Implementation Framework for coordination mechanisms for digitisation policies and programmes

Mission

This plan describes a first set of actions for improving the digitisation of cultural and scientific content in Europe and for achieving the objectives set out in the 'Lund Principles'. The plan targets activities to be completed or launched assigning responsibilities for them to Member States, to European Commission or to others. The results of the actions will be fed into an evolving plan for a sustainable set of activities in support of the digitisation framework across Europe. Updates to the plan, including reports on progress and achievements, will be presented for endorsement to the National Representatives Group, established by the Member States, at its half-yearly meetings.

Structure

The Lund Action Plan takes as its reference the Lund Principles, identifying four main areas where specific actions are needed. For each action it defines objectives, the implementation approach and associated tasks, actors, and results achieved.

- Area 1: Improving policies and programmes through co-operation and benchmarking
- Area 2: Discovery of digitised resources
- Area 3: Promotion of good practice
- Area 4: Content framework

Area 1: Improving policies and programmes through cooperation and benchmarking

Action 1a: National Web sites for policies and programmes

Objective

To maintain exchange of compatible information between Member States on programmes and policies and to give visibility to national activities in order to exchange similar experiences and skills.

Implementation and tasks

Working with a small group of experts, a baseline profile for policies will be developed, based on the questionnaire data already provided by Member States. These data will be mapped to the profile and redistributed to Member States for mounting on national Web sites. The experts will also produce a minimum set of recommended quality criteria in respect of currency, multilinguality and availability and accessibility to the citizen. Each Member State will identify appropriate Web sites for this data, together with the updating and maintenance mechanisms needed. The Commission will host in the first instance a common page pointing to the national sites.

Actors

Member States, especially those with existing sites as exemplars, will nominate experts to work in defining the baseline profile. All Member States will work to establish sites and update mechanisms for maintaining their profiles. Commission will convene experts group and will map existing data to the agreed structure of the baseline profile.

Progress December 2003

Results: profile and Web format established and existing data mapped and returned to Member States; central linking page on http://www.cordis.lu/ist/ka3/digital/national_prof.htm and MINERVA (<http://www.minervaeurope.org/>) Web sites. The following MS profiles are available, namely DK, FR, UK, IT, FIN, EL, NL, ES, SE, BE, IR, PT, DE, A. The MINERVA Web site has been extremely enhanced to support the activity of the NRG and the expert workgroups becoming a portal on digitisation on-going initiatives world-wide. A first report on the progress reached up to December 2002 by NRG activities has been published in 3500 copies. A second report covering progress up to December 2003 is under publication by March 2004. The first NRG progress report has been distributed through the official channels by the NRG representatives with a signed letter by a high level authority: a strong impact and very positive comments from target users like

policy-makers and managers or content holders. The first NRG progress report has been also presented to the Committee des Affaires Culturelles CAC on July 2003 under the Italian Presidency receiving very positive comments and strong support for developments.

Planning and priorities for 2004

A light version of the National Policy Profile will be proposed to overcome difficulties for updating reported by some of the countries. The MINERVA Web site will enhance the database and knowledge-base in order to support the NRG and the expert workgroups extending to the New Accession States, Russia and Israel. The second NRG progress report will follow the same official distribution on the extended network of 27 countries in 6000 copies.

Action 1b: Adoption of benchmarking framework 1 for policies and programmes

Objective

To endorse and implement the benchmarking framework as a key tool for co-ordination within as well as between Member States and to develop measures to show progress and improvement.

Implementation and tasks

A focus group of experts will be set up to refine the model in order to present it to Member States for agreement and for adoption. The experts will also develop a strategy for endorsement and implementation of the model, such as "Declarations of intent". In order to underpin this activity, a network of correspondents in Member States will be set up as a forum for discussion, implementation and further development of qualitative benchmarking.

Actors

Member States will nominate experts for the benchmarking workgroup and establish national "Networks of correspondents and experts". The Commission will support the workgroup for finalising the model through MINERVA.

Progress December 2003

Adoption of the model: "An open method for benchmarking digitisation policies - objectives, methodology and indicators" with draft qualitative indicators, together with an implementation plan and roadmap to advance the work, was agreed by Member States experts, December 2001. Action completed.

Implementation of the model: ongoing in Member States (NL, GR). Benchmarking Workgroup established, data collection exercise with scored (mainly qualitative) indicators piloted in NL, GR, IE, IT, NL & UK. A data collection and analysis facility (via forms on Web

site hosted via GR) established for short term data collection and an overview report produced. MINERVA working group has produced a report in August 2003, closing phase II of the exercise led by Finland, using a knowledge base integrating both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Preliminary results of the working group have been presented in Greece in June 2003, final publication with analysis and recommendations during the Italian Presidency.

Planning and priorities for 2004

The activity of the MINERVA working group is completed. The implementation of the benchmarking model goes ahead at European level re-using the global database and at national level with practical exercises in some countries mainly in mother language confirming the idea that the benchmarking approach is useful both for identifying 'good practice' or improving own practice and for selecting proposals for funding.

Action 1c: Development of indicators and collection of measures

Objective

To establish a framework for the benchmarking of the digitisation of cultural and scientific resources in Europe and to monitor the impact on eEurope objectives for European digital content in global networks.

Implementation and tasks

Starting from the policy benchmarking framework, a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators will be identified and developed together with the methodologies and partnerships with other agencies needed for their collection. Scoping work will be carried out by the Benchmarking Workgroup and supported by work on reference models for digitisation, including the definition of a suitable set of core indicators for benchmarking digitisation in Europe.

Actors

Member States will contribute through their nominated experts to the group and , set-up cooperation with other benchmarking initiatives and relevant IST projects.

Progress December 2003

Background work included in Commission call for tender for a study on August 2001 on "Reference models for digitisation practices and co-ordination" but no bids were received. Test collection of quantitative data on digitised objects and collections via 'productivity form'; and piloted in FR, IT, IE, & SP', and a collection and reporting mechanisms piloted on Web site hosted by GR. An overview report was produced. MINERVA working group on benchmarking defines and tests qualitative, scored and quantitative indicators and defines approaches to collecting these data via

productivity form for input to report under Greek Presidency, mid-2003.

Planning and priorities for 2004

The next step of collecting data extends the focus to cultural institutions.

The activity will follow the same planning like former area.

Action 1d: Supporting coordination activities

Objective

To create an infrastructure supporting co-ordination between Member States.

Implementation and tasks

A number of actions will be instigated to continue and to develop the co-operation established to date. These will include: creating a co-ordinating group of representatives from Member States, to meet initially under the aegis of the Presidency; setting up online fora or discussion groups for dialogue and exchange of experience between those in Member States responsible for or active in digitisation of cultural and scientific content; providing a supporting secretariat or facilitating agency.

Actors

Member States will set up the co-ordinating group and agree its mandate. European Commission will support the secretariat, both through new activities and through clustering ongoing IST projects.

Progress December 2003

National Representatives Group (NRG) established & Terms of Reference agreed, December 2001. Chairmanship lies with the Presidency and secretariat provided by Commission. Meetings held twice yearly, 12 December 2001; 16 May 2002, Alicante; 10 December, Copenhagen.

MINERVA network launched, 1 March 2002, as operational secretariat for co-ordinating and managing workgroups and meetings. On 1 February 2004 MINERVA Plus extends the network towards Newly Accession States, Russia and Israel. Ongoing endorsement of NRG Terms of Reference by national authorities; publication of NRG Progress report, 2002; extension of MINERVA network membership to all Member States; development of co-operation with CEE countries; promotion via MINERVA of adoption of the Lund Principles and co-operation for exchange of experience with other related activities and projects. The "Charter of Parma" was adopted at the 5th NRG meeting in Parma as a strategic report on progress to date, and inviting further support to the initiative.

NRG meetings held in Corfu in June and in Parma

in November under the coordination of the Presidency in turn and the MINERVA project. The Greek and the Italian Presidencies brought together existing networks of excellence at two workshops (June and October 2003) to exchange experience. A priority was to involve small and medium entities from the Cultural Heritage environment.

Planning and priorities for 2004

Next NRG meetings planned in Dublin in June and in The Hague in September under the coordination of the Presidency in turn and the MINERVA project. Each meeting will have also a Workshop with specific focus on cultural portals and quality from the user point of view (Dublin), and on quality and preservation of digital memory, and priorities for a new action plan (The Hague). Under the joint-effort of the Italian and Irish Presidencies, the progress assessment of MINERVA has been launched in the second half of 2003; the assessment plan has been presented and approved by the NRG meeting in Parma, November 2003; the final assessment report is expected to be presented at the NRG meeting in Dublin, June 2004. The results of the progress assessment represent the rationale for the development of the MINERVA sustainability framework. This framework is aimed at guarantee the continuation of the MINERVA network beyond the EC funding period, in order to maintain the necessary operative support to the NRG. The next meeting with other projects participating to a 'digitisation cluster' will be held on 31 March at EVA Florence to refine practical 'terms of cooperation' between projects.

Area 2: Discovery of digitised resources

Action 2a: National inventories

Objective

To make visible and accessible European cultural and scientific content by setting up inventories of on-going digitisation projects based on national observatories.

Implementation and tasks

Based on existing activities or using examples from other Member States, national inventories of projects or of selected content will be developed. The inventories need to comply with quality standards for the content to be included (based on good practice guidelines –see action 3b) and for the access services they provide. A technical workgroup led by Member States with greatest experience in this area will define the possible platforms paying particular attention to open-source and free software and produce a set of guidelines to support other Member States in establishing usable and sustainable inventories.

Actors

Member States to establish guidelines of good practice through the work group and to promote existing or develop new national inventories of projects.

Progress December 2003

Meeting in Paris, 6 July 2001 convened by Ministère de la Culture. Agreed: piloting of French system with Italy; definition of agreed inventory descriptors and submission to Dublin Core Community; assessment of feasibility of adoption of French approach and national customisation of public domain tools. Meeting in Paris, 5 July 2002, a stronger cooperation with other workgroups have been realised. State of the art report on approaches to inventories of digitised resources (March 2003); agreement on a common data format and prototype multilingual platform for inventory descriptions; customised public domain tools in XML (September 2003).

Planning and priorities for 2004

The MINERVA working group on Inventories, discovery of digitised content, multilingualism issues led by French has mainly ended its activity producing the report on inventories platforms. An associated MINERVA Plus specific topic is "Multilingual Thesaurus" to complete the development done in the previous period, on the common description model and multilingual access to digital cultural resource, complementing it with practical pilots and information from the new participating countries.

Action 2b: Discovery of digitised content

Objective

To define a sustainable technical infrastructure for co-ordinated discovery of European digitised cultural and scientific content.

Implementation and tasks

Inventories are usually a top-down exercise, but in order to make the digitised resources accessible work is also needed on defining the technical components and standards for identifying and harvesting eligible digitised content. This includes agreements on metadata, on harvesting tools, and on aggregation and retrieval services, with emphasis on public domain/open source tools and on support for multilinguality. An expert technical workgroup will examine metadata standards, taking into consideration also metadata requirements for national inventories, and make recommendations on technical strategies and on development/implementation test-beds.

Actors

Member States will set up a work group to develop

metadata recommendations and to report on strategies to the coordinating group.

Progress December 2003

Meeting in Paris, 6 July 2001 convened by Ministère de la Culture, a stronger cooperation with other workgroups have been realised, and agreement that use of the Open Archives Initiative – protocol for Metadata Harvesting may form a suitable approach. Within the MINERVA project, initial work commenced towards a pilot project.

A state-of-art review of interoperability-focused initiatives, including good-practice & technical standards; establish co-ordination and co-operation with other initiatives re IPR for digitised cultural content.

Under the coordination of UK, a first set of recommendations and interoperability pilot using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) and DC.Culture profile have been developed and reported in the Deliverable D4.1 "Report on Interoperability, Standards & IPR", available on-line, on the MINERVA Web-site. Further, with the EMII-DCF, PULLMAN and ERPANET projects have produced some technical guidelines resuming current developments for digitisation and interoperability. The work on DC.Culture is carrying on.

Planning and priorities for 2004

The MINERVA working group on Interoperability and service provision and the associated MINERVA Plus specific topic "Business models and digital rights management" will mainly complete the work done by WP4 in the previous period, on OAI and DC.Culture; a new initiative for the establishment of an Observatory will be investigated; the issue of IPR will be further developed, including the study of an e-learning special licencing model and analysis of existing software solutions, with particular regard to the exploitable results of European funded projects.

Area 3: Promotion of good practice

Action 3a: Good practice exemplars & guidelines

Objective

Support skills and efficiency by encouraging take-up of good practice.

Implementation and tasks

Member States should select and promote good practice examples from their projects in order to exchange experiences, skills and to collect consensus from different communities. Take-up projects in cultural heritage under the IST Programme will be analysed for potential contribution to good practice. Existing good practice guidelines will be identified and promoted in the short term, with a view to producing a set of consensus guidelines on good practice at a later

date. Relevant standards will also be identified and recommendations about their application developed, for example through workgroups and projects.

Actors

Member States to develop and promote their own examples of good practice and to validate good practice guidelines for dissemination in national languages; MINERVA; with Commission and ongoing projects, to provide overview of existing guidelines and to propose structure or typology for consolidating guidelines.

Progress December 2003

Workshop on good practice, Alicante, 17 May 2002 and report, December 2002 (issued by MINERVA). An Handbook on Good Practices, edited by the MINERVA project, has been published and promoted at the workshops on digitisation of cultural content, organised in June by the Greek Presidency and November by the Italian Presidency. A first selection of available guidelines for digitisation has been edited and published on the MINERVA Web site.

Planning and priorities for 2004

Validation of good practice guidelines, issued from MINERVA; Member States to translate, if necessary, and to distribute to cultural institutions; ongoing updates of good practice examples.

A new campaign for good practice examples have been launched involving also the new countries joining the extended MINERVA network: the target is to reach 200 examples at least.

The working group on Identification of Good Practices and Competence Centres and the associated MINERVA Plus specific topic "Cost reduction in the digitisation of cultural contents" will mainly work on gathering new examples of good practices, also from the new participating countries. A specific focus will be devoted to cases of successful projects who managed to find solutions for the reduction of the cost of digitisation, including workflow and other possible technologies/products. The theme of the selection criteria to be applied in the launch of digitisation programmes will also represent an important aspect in the frame of the discussion about cultural policy issues.

Action 3b: Competence centres

Objective

Promoting "centres of competence".

Implementation and tasks

Organisations or consortia of organisations with leading skills and competences in key technical domains should establish services to support and

inform cultural organisations embarking on digitisation. These services may be established or promoted at national level or at European level, including using the possibilities under the IST programme aimed at sharing and promoting European excellence and leadership.

Actors

Member States, research organisations and industry.

Progress December 2003

A serious problem was the definition of 'competence centre' emerging that most of the countries don't have such a definition, anyhow a first selection of advisory centres for specific aspects of the digitisation process has been edited and published on the MINERVA Web site.

Planning and priorities for 2004

Carrying on this exercise.

Area 4: Content framework

4a: Cooperative action plan for access to quality European digitised content

Objective

To optimise the value and to develop shared visions of European content, by developing criteria and a framework for an EU collaboration plan for digital cultural and scientific content together with an appropriate implementation means (eg Charter, MoU, Terms of Reference).

Implementation and tasks

Once the co-ordinating group is established, and with the eventual support of its secretariat, a cooperative approach for a European eCulture infrastructure (eCulture Portal) for access to digitised cultural and scientific heritage should be developed, based on identifying added value and quality criteria for the digitised content to be included, on technical standards and agreements on their implementation, and on service quality. The strategic means of implementing this should also be identified.

Actors

Member States.

Progress December 2003

Inclusion of quality issues in the Council Resolution (2002/C 32/01) on culture and the knowledge society of 21 January 2002.

Establishment of working group on quality and development of Brussels Quality Framework (BQF) - draft framework of criteria for quality and accessibility of cultural Web sites, presented in outline to NRG meeting, 11 December 2001, revised document

agreed by experts of 10 Member States, May 2002.
 Test of W3C-WAI guidelines by Commission on difficult Web pages and recommendations. (<http://www.cordis.lu/ist/ka3/digital/eeurope-overview.htm>).
 MINERVA WP5, coordinated by Belgium has developed a set of instruments targeted to the cultural institutions which have to create, develop and maintain their Web-sites. In particular, two main products, namely:
 B the 10 Principles for Quality Cultural Web-sites, a synthetic representation of the most important aspects that should be taken in consideration for the creation of cultural Web applications;
 B the Handbook for Quality Cultural Web-sites, a rich document providing an extensive collection of definitions, principles, practical examples and recommendations for cultural Web developers.
 Under the Italian Presidency recommendations on quality criteria for cultural Web sites have been proposed for approval and adoption at European level, during the MINERVA European conference in Parma on 20-21 November.

Planning and priorities for 2004

Validation of criteria with Member States; development of implementation strategy, with proposals for recommendations from the quality workgroup.
 The working group on Identification of user needs, content and quality framework for common access points and the associated MINERVA Plus specific topic "Small cultural institutions" will mainly finalise the development of the 10 Principles for the Quality of cultural Web-sites, by producing an interpretation layer and self-assessment tools; a very important target of these products are the small cultural institutions, whose specific needs and requirements will be taken in consideration, with attention.

4b: Sustainable access to content

Objective

Ensure digitised cultural and scientific content is available over time.

Implementation and tasks

The application of standards and adoption of good practice provide some safeguards for the future availability of digitised content, but this is very limited. Research is needed into long-term preservation issues, into scoping and identifying the core problem areas, and in developing appropriate technical solutions. A research agenda for future actions needs to be developed to meet these goals. The DLM Forum and IST supported actions will input to this process

Actors

Commission and industry.

Progress December 2003

DLM Forum 2002 Barcelona, May 2002, with support of Spanish Presidency, and industry position papers sent to Commissioner Liikanen. IST support action ERPANET on good practice and awareness for digital preservation (launched November 2002).
 Council Resolution (2002/C 162/02) of 25 June 2002 on "Preserving tomorrow's memory — preserving digital content for future generations" under the Spanish Presidency.
 Research road map from EU-NSF joint working group on digital archiving. Workshop on preservation of digital memory; 11 December 2002 in Copenhagen under the Danish Presidency. A workshop has been held in June, organised by the Greek Presidency.
 An international Conference on preservation of digital memory in Florence, organised by the Italian Presidency, produced on 17th of October the Firenze agenda, a first programmatic document to organise activity around digital memory preservation, by an expert workgroup nominated by the NRG and co-ordinated for the first phase by the Italian presidency and the European Commission.

Planning and priorities for 2004

Commission to respond to Resolution's invitation to develop an action plan, as appropriate; implementation of FP6 work programme 2003-2004 and of successful preservation proposals.
 The Dutch Presidency in the second semester of 2004 will organise an international conference on the digitisation of cultural heritage including the persistence of infrastructures, content and enrichment. The progress of the "Firenze agenda" will be presented in the context of this conference. The Dutch and the Italian presidencies will together manage the 3 area's of the Firenze Agenda. A simple Web site will be developed by the Dutch presidency to collect progress results and input for the conference.

Parma NRG Meeting Conclusions

Summary and Objectives of the meeting

The fifth meeting of the NRG was held on 19 November in Parma under the chairmanship of the Italian Presidency of the European Union. In addition, a conference on "Quality for cultural Web sites" was held on 20-21 November. Both events were hosted by the Italian Ministry of Culture (MBAC) in Parma, in collaboration with the Ministry for Innovation and Technologies, with the Parma city local Authorities, the Region and the University of Parma.

The NRG is established, according to its Terms of Reference (ToR), to monitor, implement and coordinate actions concerning digitisation programmes and policies in Europe. Formal adoption or endorsement of the ToR by the participating EU Member States is ongoing and progress is reported regularly to the NRG.

The Lund Principles are a set of guiding objectives concerning digitisation and the coordination of Member States policies and programmes. The Lund Action Plan maps out the actions needed and is updated with progress and planning on a 6-monthly cycle.

The actions are agreed at NRG meetings, and the MINERVA network working with the Member States representatives turns those actions into a practical reality.

The specific objectives of the meeting in Parma were to:

- o Report on progress in the Member States in meeting the objectives outlined in the Lund Principles, approve the Charter of Parma as strategic document of the NRG and start a review process leading to an Assessment Plan under the Irish Presidency.

- o Validate the content and planning for the 2nd "NRG report – progress 2003 and planning 2004" to be published by the European Commission and MINERVA.

- o Introduce Newly Accession States (NAS) representatives to the NRG; Russia and Israel representatives were welcomed as observers at the meeting.

- o Identify and prioritise emerging issues and concrete results in 2004, recommend and endorse new strategies and actions to take these forward through the Lund Action Plan and other relevant ongoing initiatives.

This report presents firstly the key statements from the meeting, then the progress made up to December 2003 for each action line, and, finally future actions and emerging issues.

Key Statements

1. The NRG welcomed NAS representatives' Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the two observers from Russia and Israel. The MINERVA Plus

project with extension to the NAS countries plus Russia and Israel, was announced.

2. The 2nd NRG Report will include a report from both the 25 countries and Russia and Israel. Next NRG report is planned for late 2003, but with a stronger focus on strategic issues. A first proposal for the NRG Handbook, as a companion compilation of factual data on portals and national profiles, useful contacts and networks, available guidelines and standards, training courses, etc. was presented for comments.
3. The implementation of the Lund Action Plan is proceeding as scheduled. Concrete actions in 2004 are identified, and a clearer focus on results, "products", and success indicators is envisaged. A review process is launched and will continue under the Irish Presidency leading to an Assessment Plan.
4. The "Charter of Parma" is a strategic document presenting the overall initiatives and highlighting progress and potential impact. It presents activities and invites the Member States and the Commission to support the initiative.
5. The NRG confirms that a new action plan will be developed for mid 2005. A blueprint will be produced under Dutch presidency. MINERVA will support the discussions and provide the necessary infrastructure. The Lund Principles remain the reference for the NRG. The position paper on EU-added value and post-Lund strategy produced by the Dutch representative and presented in Parma proved a valuable starting point for defining future strategic actions.
6. Three practical products, the MINERVA knowledge base (the former NRG Handbook), the Good Practice Handbook and the 10 principles and the Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites are in progress or being finalised.
7. Smaller cultural institutions, and the inclusion of industry, academia and public authorities into the MINERVA user community, remains a key topic still to be addressed. MINERVA will develop an advocacy plan for the NRG on key issues and challenges. MINERVA will present this advocacy plan to the next NRG for discussion.
8. Cooperation with other projects, both EC funded and national, is progressing well through meetings and concrete agreements with main networks and new FP6 projects, e.g. the 'digitisation cluster meeting' held during Bibliocom in Rome at the end of October 2003. The NRG wishes to be informed in advance on these future cooperation agreements.
9. The "Firenze agenda" is proposed by an experts group to the NRG for endorsement as an extension of the current action plan in order to link issues related to digital memory preservation. The initiative is supported by the Italian Presidency, the European Commission, the MINERVA

and ERPANET projects. Other projects have already joined the initiative and also the UNESCO has given full support to the agenda.

Progress of implementation up to December 2003

The Lund Action Plan takes as its reference the Lund Principles, identifying four main areas where specific actions are needed. For each action it defines objectives, the implementation approach and associated tasks, actors, and results achieved. NRG has launched various activities to cover issues within the four areas and, even if they often overlap each other, it's possible to map back activities to the four core areas. Five priorities were established for the second semester 2003, and were underlined by the Italian Presidency as areas where rapid progress was expected.

1. Consolidate the leading role of the NRG and high-level commitment to the Lund Principles, also using the tool of publications and recommendations.

Progress: the Italian Presidency presented the conclusions of the last NRG meeting in Corfu at the Committee des Affaires Culturelle CAC in Brussels in July 2003. The reception was very positive, and the NRG and MINERVA were encouraged to continue their work. The 2nd NRG report is being prepared by MINERVA, and will be published in Feb. 2004. The approach is more strategy-oriented and it will include national reports from the 15 Member States, from the 10 NAS, and from the two observers to the NRG: Russia and Israel. The NRG report will be published and widely distributed through the official channels as well as on the MINERVA Web site. The Italian and Irish Presidencies have launched an Assessment Plan in order to review progress and outline future practical objectives. Concerning long term strategy development, the Dutch national representative has developed a position paper focussing on the EU-added value of this initiative.

A strategic document, the "Charter of Parma", is proposed to the NRG in Parma for approval. It represents the natural continuation of the NRG priority to consolidate the position of the group, to build consensus and to promote the adoption of common recommendations and guidelines. The draft Charter has been presented at the CAC meeting on the 27th of October 2003. After the NRG adoption, the Charter will be presented at the formal Council of Cultural Ministries, on the 24th of November 2003, still under the Italian Presidency.

2. Present the guidelines for quality for Web sites on culture.

Progress : It was proposed 3 levels of tools: The Ten Principles, (a draft version) which is a guide for the development of cultural access points that celebrate European cultural diversity by providing high quality access for all to digital cultural content. (A short and a long versions were proposed). The explanations of these principles will be the 2nd level of tools, they will be drafted in the next months. The quality principles will be described through criteria which will be used to measure the principles themselves. And finally the 3rd level, the Handbook for Quality in Cultural Websites, improving quality for citizens which is a working document and also a work in progress.

All these tools are building on the Brussels Quality Framework and taking also into account the W3C-WAI accessibility guidelines and other international initiatives. The principles outline quality criteria for cultural Web sites and include a practical checklist to be used during site creation and maintenance. After the meeting in Parma, the workgroup will finalise the quality tools and will develop a concrete implementation strategy. Within the MINERVA Quality Working Group was set up a European Editorial Committee.

Focus should be given to quality principles and criteria specific to cultural Web sites as opposed to general quality criteria for Web design. An international conference on quality and accessibility for cultural Web sites was organised for 20-21 November in Parma. The substantial response and interest from user communities, national authorities and professional bodies, demonstrated the importance of the issue.

3. Extend the network to NAS and small institutions.

Progress: A new project MINERVA Plus will be funded by the European Commission to enlarge MINERVA to the New Accession States (NAS), to extend existing working groups, and to include the participation of both Russia and Israel. The Italian Presidency, in cooperation with the European Commission, formally invited through the CAC the NAS countries to nominate representatives to the NRG. At this 5th NRG meeting most of the NAS countries nominated representatives and presented their national digitisation activities.

Presentations

from both Russia and Israel were also welcomed. Initial, but valuable, tasks have already been started in some NAS countries, e.g. translation of Lund Principles, establishing of national coordination groups.

It is evident, based on the national reports and introductions presented by the NAS countries, that there are on going digitisation projects in almost every country. Common issues emerge such as IPR, quality and accessibility, interoperability and so on. Coordination at national and European level appears to be an important issue to be addressed in order to exchange good practices, focus investments and share results with other countries. MINERVA will offer co-ordination mechanisms already implemented and all the products such as training courses, handbooks and the Web site. The MINERVA Plus structure foresees the integration of NAS experts into the original workgroups to share experience and skill within the enlarged network. In the framework of the PATRAS-ROME initiative a network of small cultural institutions has been established in Greece.

4. Finalise the handbook on good practice before publication.

Progress: Comments and changes have been made following the meeting in Corfu. The first version of the "Good Practice Handbook" is now ready to be published and widely distributed and promoted in order to create awareness with institutional actors. The Handbook was discussed and validated by the MINERVA workgroup at the workshop in Rome on 29 October at Bibliocom. By definition this type of publication must be considered as 'work in progress', so an updating and validation strategy is needed. This must involve the collection of new good practice examples and the extraction of the new lessons learned. MINERVA is finalising a database project and one of the features will be a way to collect new good practice suggestions.

5. Carry on the activity on preservation of digital memory.

Progress: The Italian Presidency has promoted, in cooperation with the European Commission and the ERPANET and MINERVA projects, an international conference on digital memory preservation on 16-17 October 2003 in Firenze. In preparing the conference an expert group prepared a joint document, the "Firenze agenda", identifying three priority topics – create awareness, exchange of good practice, and the development

of a long-term strategy. A substantial consensus was seen with institutional actors, national authorities, UNESCO, as well as with many EU funded projects working in the domain. Some very practical short-term actions have been identified and progress will be reviewed during the Dutch Presidency.

Progress in other areas

NRG Report

The 1st NRG report gave visibility to a significant number of important national initiatives, showed that there was much to say on the issues of standards and good practices, and that coordination approaches in the Member States are now numerous and followed a wide variety of cooperative models.

Distribution of the report in most of the countries has followed official channels covering Ministers, ministerial advisors and correspondents in the field of digitisation, experts on digital documentation and multimedia, national programmes of digitisation, and cultural institutions and organisations, including provincial museums, archives and libraries.

The approach opened channels for future NRG publications and reinforced the position of NRG in accordance with their ToR.

In addition it is now recognised that EU initiatives, such as the NRG and MINERVA, can influence national activities and that some new national initiatives explicitly reference the Lund Principles and the work of the NRG. The 2nd NRG report is under preparation, coordinated by the Italian Presidency. It will focus on policy issues (institutional, regional, sectoral) in the Member States, as well as national programme initiatives and strategic developments considerations. This 2nd report will extend its coverage to the 10 new accession states (NAS), and will include a section for non-EU countries with contributions from Russian and Israel. A particular emphasis will be placed on how digitisation is becoming an element in wider information or knowledge society policies. It will also focus more on the emerging cooperative actions between Member States and in the international context. Another emerging issue to be addressed is how to make the Lund Principles and the actions of the NRG more relevant and visible to smaller cultural institutions. With the continued trend towards decentralisation in the Member States the 2nd NRG report will provide a more in depth coverage of specific regional digitisation activities.

MINERVA Knowledge base

The definition of the NRG Handbook given in the Corfu conclusions has evolved in to a new concept of the MINERVA knowledge base. It will host all factual

information relating to digitisation in Europe, including national policy profiles and Web pages, information on membership, status, mandates and working methods of national coordination groups through a "Who is who in cultural digitisation", information on centres of practical expertise and advice, and lists of nationally recognised guidelines, benchmarking results and training courses will be published and updated on the MINERVA Web site.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking helps increase the overall quality of digitisation projects and supports the exchange of good practice, is valuable for project monitoring and review, and it can be used in the selection of projects by funded authorities.

The model for benchmarking has been adopted and is being implemented, according to national requirements. The MINERVA benchmarking working group split its activities into 3 phases, namely:

- Phase 1: experiment run during 2002 - results have been integrated into the NRG Report 2002
- Phase 2: finalisation of tools and methods in order to extend benchmarking to a larger user community until August 2003 - delivering to phase 3 the online tool as well as a larger sample of surveyed institutions per country
- Phase 3: starts late 2003 - focus on campaign for questionnaire collection, analysis and exploitation of gathered data, tool improvements, and the involvement of the new accession states.

The progress made so far has been very encouraging and MINERVA produced a report in August 2003 outlining ways to develop and promote the use of the benchmarking tool.

The next step is to help institutions find benchmarking partners so that they can share results and best practices. Another objective must be to define qualitative and quantitative data about current practices and to improve visibility on digitisation projects, programmes and policies.

Cooperative networks

Cooperative networks now exist in almost all Member States, and their role and competences are described in the NRG Handbook. The workshops hosted under the Hellenic and Italian Presidencies brought together many of the well-established national and European networks (Corfu in June 2003 and Rome in October 2003). At Bibliocom on 29 October, MINERVA organised a meeting on digitisation and invited all the main networks and projects working in the field.

A common approach based on a "terms of cooperation" joint document was developed with a view to creating a European Area for digitisation.

Among other significant initiatives, the cooperation with the EMII-DCF – 'MINERVA joint position paper

on the importance of IST research for heritage resources' is one of the most valuable results and example of synergy between projects funded by the European Commission.

Inventories and resource discovery

Lists of digitised content guidelines have been compiled to help set up national inventories of digitised content, as well as specifications for a pan-European platform. Descriptions of French and Italian collections are accessible through an experimental common portal.

A first meeting brought together European specialists of multilingual access to heritage resources.

A cooperation with MINERVA quality and good practices focuses will allow to raise awareness with cultural actors on the importance of taking into account the European multilingual environment when creating digital cultural content.

The identification of existing complementary digitised collections could eventually lead to the creation of joint services.

Interoperability

Interoperability depends upon the implementation of technical standards. Discussion between MINERVA and the ERPANET, EMII-DCF and PULMAN projects resulted in the agreed need to develop a common set of Technical Guidelines. These Guidelines were to be aimed to support those developing new digitisation programmes, encouraging the adoption of good practice as part of the requirements for funding. An initial version of the document was presented and comments are invited. The Technical Guidelines will be maintained and updated to ensure that they are kept up to date as standards change and new developments are adopted. Together, the Quality Principles, Technical Guidelines, Good Practice Guidelines and Benchmarking establish a virtuous circle.

Together with work on Inventories, a coherent model has been established for the development of interoperable services at a European level. The adoption of common XML schema for collections and digital services, agreement on basic terminologies, the use of DC.Culture for item-level searching, and the use of Open Archives Initiative together offer the opportunity to build a European inventory of digitisation projects.

In order to continue these developments, it is essential that work such as on the Technical Guidelines and Good Practice Guidelines are maintained. The role of an Observatory could be very interesting, undertaking roles of horizon-scanning, maintaining guidelines and co-ordinating the European contribution to global initiatives. This Observatory could be constructed by the networking, on a sustainable basis, of existing leading organisations in the field. The NRG should be look at the idea of an observatory in the near future. On Intellectual

Property Rights, work has concentrated on the ways in which the re-use of materials within an educational context can be enabled and on a framework that could be negotiated with copyright licensing agencies to simplify the cost of clearing rights for digitisation.

The Patras-Rome initiative and on-going work
The objective of this initiative has been to focus attention on the societal and economic value of digitisation and long-term digital preservation in Europe and has represented an instrument to link the priorities of the Greek and Italian Presidencies. Two major focuses have been prioritised: the understanding of needs and requirements of small cultural organisations and the consolidation of recommendations and technical guidelines, representing a practical answer to the small organisations' needs.
During the Italian Presidency, a network of small cultural organisations has been established experimentally in Greece to demonstrate a practical way to provide support in accessing national funds for digitisation (for further information about the initiative, please refer to the Greek National Report, November 2003). The analysis of the demand of the small organisations will continue as a specific topic in the MINERVA Plus work plan.

A collection of existing guidelines for digitisation has been included in the Good Practices Handbook. Technical Guidelines are under development in the frame of WP3 and WP4 and in cooperation with EMII-DCF project. A first draft of the Technical Guidelines has been distributed for comments just before the Parma NRG meeting and will be finalised in early 2004.

Immediate actions (January – June 2004)
For the first semester 2004 the Irish Presidency sets out the following priorities:

1. To complete the progress assessment of the 'Coordinating Digitisation in Europe' initiative. This will be formally launched by the Irish minister with responsibility for culture.
2. To launch the Dublin Folio, comprising the publications completed by the NRG/MINERVA.
3. To coordinate the extension of the NRG to include the New Accession States, Israel and Russia.
4. To explore the development of portal initiatives in the context of a future European Cultural Portal.
5. To support the ongoing focus on digital preservation by hosting a meeting of national experts in this area. This will contribute to future work, led by the Netherlands presidency.

The meeting agreed that the NRG members at national level would undertake and support the following actions, in addition to the ongoing support for the workgroups coordinated through MINERVA.

Practical actions to be undertaken before the next NRG meeting:

- The 2nd NRG report is planned for December 2003, under the Italian Presidency. It focuses on policy developments, national initiatives and strategic developments considerations. Coverage is extended to the 10 States preparing for adhesion to the EU, plus Russia and Israel. It will be published early 2004 and distributed by MINERVA in cooperation with the Irish and the Dutch Presidency. The Dutch Presidency will also ensure the preparation of the 3rd NRG report planned for late 2004. Contributions for the 2nd NRG report must arrive by the beginning of December 2003.
- Under the Italian Presidency the "Charter of Parma" has been produced, a strategic document promoting all the activities, to be presented to the Council of Ministers of Culture on 24 November 2003. The Irish Presidency will continue the distribution and promotion of the Charter that will be available on the Web site and in a paper copy for distribution.
- Under the Italian Presidency a scientific seminar on "Territorial Information systems for the Preservation, Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage" was held in Naples 23-24 Oct. 2003. The meeting looked at the important role of geographic information in the context of cultural heritage, e.g. archaeological sites, etc., and proposed a permanent group to bring together Europe-wide actions in the field. The NRG is invited to interact with this new group through the MINERVA network.
- A new MINERVA knowledge Base has been developed in order to host factual information derived from the work of the network and to make them available on-line. The "Who is who" is a by-product of the knowledge base with factual information about policies, programmes and coordination activities in the Member States. Comments on the structure were from the NRG. Feedback is needed on the initial data structures and data collection for both products. Deadlines: all the partners to send comments about data structure and collection by 5 December 2003; Italy and Spain to deliver a full data collection plan by 19 December 2003; a first version of the populated database and 'Who is who' by January 2004; all the partners should commit to contribute to data gathering and updating.
- The Good Practice Handbook distributed at the NRG meeting in Parma must be considered as the collection of the lessons learnt, through the analysis of good practices collected so far. Selection of good practices and competence centres is however a continuous work for which the support of NRG is fundamental. Web forms on the MINERVA Web site call for new examples of good practices and competence centres, which will be stored in the MINERVA Knowledge Base. Each country is asked

to nominate at least one expert to join the MINERVA working group and to act as the reference point at national level for approving the proposed good practices and competence centres and for disseminating the Handbook in their respective countries. A summary version of the handbook will be produced in order to encourage national translation and distribution.

- The Progress Assessment launched by the Italian and Irish Presidency will continue and will be integrated with the on-going work of the Netherlands on EU-added value and post-Lund strategy (including the work already presented in Parma). This will include a set of concrete objectives and success indicators for each action in the Lund Action plan. It will also define a set of possible priorities for a next action plan in 2005, and the Netherlands has indicated that they will be the first to take on these new priorities.
- The International Conference on Long-Term Preservation of Digital Memory organised under the Italian Presidency was a success and produced the Firenze agenda with priority actions to be undertaken in the next 12/18 months. Some projects have assumed responsibility for different areas. The Dutch Presidency has already offered to host another conference on this issue. A Web page will be prepared and the workgroup will restart activity immediately after Parma under the coordination of the Italian Ministry of Culture – ICCU. The NRG has adopted the initiative and the experts group supported by MINERVA and ERPANET and other projects. Each country is invited to nominate experts by December 2003 (ideally those already participating in the current workgroup).
- The 10 principles and the Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites were presented in Parma - in a version 'request for comments' in order to enlarge consensus and to prepare an implementation strategy. The MINERVA workgroup will propose some mechanisms and a schedule of actions. A monitor and review strategy to measure acceptance by the different Member States and determine the impact of the initiative must be produced by the workgroup in the next 6 months. The focus should be on criteria, principles and guidance for quality of cultural Web sites and only consider general Web design criteria where absolutely necessary.
- At the meeting in Rome on 30 October, important consensus has been collected about the idea of a digitisation cluster launched in Corfu. Representatives of many networks or projects joined the proposal and declared terms of availability for cooperation with other projects. The final document, referred as Roma agenda summaries agreements and outlines the next steps towards an ambitious objective of a European Area for digitisation. The next meeting of the group

will take place at the EVA Florence in March 2004.

- The benchmarking report produced by the MINERVA workgroup closes a phase of development. Now the work should focus on providing a tool to measure and improve practices. The longer-term focus will be online benchmarking, analysis and exploitation of gathered data, tool improvements, and the involvement of the new accession states. A clear strategy for follow-up is expected by the MINERVA workgroup and NRG.
- The Italian workgroup on IPR has produced a work based on the national legal situation that is a starting point to define possible scenarios and opportunities. The objective is offer a clear map for decision-makers and the national level, and to identify a minimum common platform to build European e-services. Additional work must be done in exploring suitable business models and revenue production for economical sustainability. A completed framework to lower the costs of clearing IPR will be presented to the next meeting of the NRG.
- General call to extend experts participation in all the MINERVA workgroups as a way to bring together a wider range of experts in different national networks.
- The inventories of resources and the interoperability MINERVA workgroup will cooperate to write a explanation on: the quality principles for cultural Web sites and multilingualism. This will include a description of good practice of multilingual access to cultural resources, the use of good practices methodology, the identification of several European complementary collections, and any improvement to the French-Italian portal in order to attract additional participants.
- MINERVA e-learning courses aim to introduce participants and institutions to the key issues and decision points that they face in acquiring, managing, and preserving digital collections. The course combines elements of distance learning with face-to-face interaction. It also includes learning material elaborated by other projects and institutions such as ABSIDE, HATII of the University of Glasgow, and the joint masters degree of the Universities of Northumbria and Parma.

Emerging strategic issues

Future strategies and EU-added value

The Lund Action Plan will close in 2005. A follow-up is under discussion and preparation by NRG and MINERVA. A concrete outline of new and continued objectives, actions and instruments will be prepared and possibly presented by the Dutch Presidency during the Council meeting in November 2004, for further preparation by the following presidencies.

Preservation of digital and digitised memory
A first agenda for co-operation and actions has

emerged in the form of a "Firenze agenda" adopted by the NRG. Cooperation exists bringing together all current European and international actors in digital memory conservation activities. Actions consist of workshops, seminars, and co-ordination and network services. During the Dutch Presidency attention to the issue will continue, and they plan to organise a European conference on preservation and access of digital and digitised heritage, cultural websites and media-art. Progress of the Firenze agenda will be reviewed during the Dutch Presidency.

Cultural Portals

The concept of a portal is increasingly seen as valuable tool to present cultural resources and to dialogue with the citizen. Today it should be seen as an important practical step in providing improved access to cultural collections. Many Member State reports highlight the role of cultural portals, and/or culture "nets", and indirectly underline the increasing importance of collection building and standards. Portals and culture-nets can integrate work on policy profiles, inventories and interoperability, research on distributed digital libraries, resource discovery services, collection descriptions, quality, accessibility and usability, multilingualism, best practices, etc. The portal is an excellent way to reach a very wide user community and offer a set of e-services based upon digital heritage. The portal federates the efforts of cultural and memory organisations (archives, libraries, museums), e-government actors, academia, and industry. Today education and cultural tourism are two of the most powerful drives for creating these applications, however others can be expected to emerge in the future. The Irish Presidency will host a conference in Dublin on 29 June 2004 examining the issue of portals from an end-user viewpoint.

IPR

The issues of IPR are complex, with uncertainty on the adoption of DRM mechanisms and a legal framework that has many difficulties for the cultural sector. Even the private sector has difficulty in building sustainable business models. In this context, five actions will be launched:

- Creation of training guide on IPR, based on the EMII-DCF project deliverables and the Italian study
- Development of a model requirements for a Digital Rights Management system, and a tool to assist cultural sector organisations in assessing the suitability of DRM solutions
- Meeting of experts to review the implementation of the Copyright Directive
- Define the parameters and roles for creating a secure and protected digital environment
- of cultural heritage collections
- Define the parameters and roles of Trusted Third Parties and services in cultural sector business models

New interactive technologies

New technology developments in the fields of 3D scanning, photo realistic modelling, geographic information systems, location-based systems and services, virtual-, mixed-, and augmented-reality, etc. are increasingly being featured in Member State reports. These technologies are becoming both less expensive and easier to use, the technical delivery infrastructure such as broadband is now more diffused and affordable, and thus new "3-D" programmes for cultural heritage are increasingly being developed. The use of these new tools, when combined with the cultural expertise resident in Europe's institutions, allows the creation of new cultural experiences. They permit the creations of, and interaction with, models and visualisations of objects, sites, monuments, etc. and collections of such objects. Some cooperative effort could be useful if concentrated on:

- Understanding the way such models can go beyond a simple visualisation, and support new evaluation processes, control and management activities, etc.
- The way such models can be linked to documentary and data collections
- The role such models and visualisation can have in supporting the way the public in institutions interacts with cultural content and cultural institutions
- The coordination of public and private efforts to create a new form of digital library of models and visualisations, supporting comparative analysis and acting as an education resource.

The specific features of 3D digitisation and the role of such data when included in portable or fixed immersive and interactive systems would justify the creation of an ad-hoc working group. The task would be to look at the usefulness of the different technologies and document good practices, identify particular technical barriers and constraints, examine interoperability issues, and ensuring a proper articulation with the work of the NRG and MINERVA.

Conclusions of the meeting

The NRG is guardian of the Lund Principles and a platform for pro-active coordination, as stated in its Terms of Reference and from now on in the "Charter of Parma". MINERVA is responsible for the routine implementation of Lund Action Plan. The NRG promotes the objectives of Lund and where appropriate the products of MINERVA, identifies emerging priorities, and encourages wider cooperation both between different cultural institutions and with other related sectors. NRG members must ensure the continuity of

the actions, develop collectively new themes and goals, and plan for their regular meetings.

The NRG appreciated the Italian Presidency's work in support of the Lund Action Plan and welcomed at the strategic level the discussions on new priorities and the assessment plan to review the process, and at the practical level the development of concrete results and products and the follow-up given to the former Presidencies work on digital preservation. In particular, the NRG considers that the effective cooperation and grouping started with some other projects and national initiatives is an added value really significant to reinforce the consensus and approach across Europe. Building on the positive experience made during the Greek and the Italian Presidencies at the NRG meeting in Corfu. Now the cooperation and planning of actions to be undertaken in common by current and successive presidencies has taken a step forwards, and also involves the Irish and Dutch Presidencies. The European Commission and NRG encourages such initiatives. The Irish Presidency will host the 6th NRG meeting in Dublin on 28 June 2004. On the preceding day, the final report of the "Progress Assessment of the coordinating digitisation in Europe" initiative will be launched. On 29 June 2004, there will be a digitisation conference "Access all areas: serving the user". This conference will examine portals from an end-user perspective. The NRG thanked the Italian Presidency for the organisation of and constructive input to the debate of this meeting. A special thanks was expressed to the city of Parma, the local authorities and institutes for the warm hospitality and excellent support.

¹ See: *An open method for benchmarking digitisation policies - objectives, methodology and indicators*, draft working document proposed by the Commission
<ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/list/docs/digital/benchmarking-digitisation-model.pdf>

