



Belgium

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Policy scenario

It includes the following sections:

- General description of the political support for digitisation (and national ownership)
- Range of policy (geographical, institutional and ideological)
- Available instruments and the use of those: guidelines, funds, target organisations

1. Flemish Community

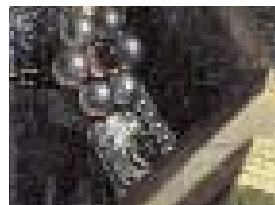
The new policy memorandum on Culture 2004-2009 sets out the way in which the Minister for Culture wants the cultural field in Flanders to evolve in the coming years. One of the points on which the policy memorandum focuses is eCulture. The intention to develop an integrated policy with regard to eCulture in Flanders has thus gained considerable importance. Digital heritage has a place in this story, but a policy with regard to eCulture is broader and goes beyond that. It intends to follow the evolutions within the various cultural sectors, the arts and heritage sector included. Therefore, strategic alliances between those various cultural institutions and actors are central, but also between the cultural sectors, research, education and industry. In this context, the possibilities for culture of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technologies (www.ibbt.be), which was recently established, will be explored since it also has a focus on digital archiving. Also work has started on realising a clearer policy vision with regard to eCulture in Flanders.

It is also expected that the results of the study carried out by PACKED, the Platform Archiving and Conservation of Art Creations on Electronic and Digital

Media, will provide important input (www.packed.be). The study aimed at formulating a proposal to provide a long-term, structural and phased solution to the issue of conservation of audio-visual and multimedial art creations and documents, with particular attention for the broader framework of cultural heritage.

The study opted for a broad starting point, focusing on the preservation of video and media art within the framework of the growing convergence of the media, telecommunication and information technology, and of the broadcasting and film industry, but also on the renewed dynamics between the production, preservation and distribution of audio-visual media. Whereas the emphasis was in the first place put on the arts field, the possible common ground with the larger world of heritage was examined as well, with regard to the needs, know-how and infrastructure. In Flanders a policy distinction is made between immovable heritage on the one hand and movable and intangible heritage on the other. The care for immovable heritage is a regional matter and comes under the Town and Country Planning, Housing and Monuments Protection Administration. The Community is competent for the movable and intangible heritage, i.e. cultural heritage, which comes under the Culture Administration.

In Flanders, the concept of cultural heritage is interpreted in a broad sense in terms of policy. Museums, archives, documentation centres, conservation libraries and related institutions have many valuable objects in their possession. But traditions, stories and customs are just as valuable to cultural heritage. The Flemish government is rapidly developing a contemporary cultural heritage policy, based on two main accents. The first emphasis is laid on the social embedding of cultural heritage, besides



the classical conservation and opening up of it.

By focusing on community building, cultural heritage becomes the driving force for economic as well as social and cultural dynamics.

The second emphasis implies an intangible approach: cultural heritage only exists if it is continuously reconsidered and reviewed. Material things do not exist without the web of stories surrounding them either. The Flemish Community hereby undertakes the task of pursuing a comprehensive and integrated policy in the field of cultural heritage policy, which seeks to consider all aspects of cultural heritage, to approach them in an open and comprehensive way and at the same time to find and maintain connections with other policy areas. Cultural heritage is indeed part of our society and touches on education, tourism, economy and other sections of society as well. On this basis, the Flemish cultural authorities are working on a master plan on Cultural Heritage. A study on the building blocks of digital heritage commissioned by the Flemish Community was recently completed. The study was carried out in collaboration with the expertise centres "Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen vzw" (non-profit organisation Cultural Biography of Flanders: www.culturelebiografie.be) and "Vlaams Centrum voor Volkscultuur vzw" (non-profit organisation Flemish Centre for the Study of Popular Culture: www.vcv.be). By means of the policy-oriented Delphi method, forty-one experts were submitted to an elaborate survey, composed of three question rounds. The final results were validated in 18 visions, which resulted in 63 policy recommendations. Several recommendations will be integrated in the trajectory of the master plan on cultural heritage. Other recommendations will be carried out in partnerships of different heritage institutions in Flanders.

2. French Community

Declaration of Community Policy

In the French Community of Belgium, 2004 has been the year of the arrival of a new government that, in its declaration of Community Policy, defined its priorities. One of them is the will to preserve the cultural and scientific heritage of the French Community, among others by taking up the enormous challenge set by digitisation, while taking into account budget impacts.

In the audio-visual field, the governmental declaration stipulates that "the archives of the RTBF (French Radio-Television in Belgium), an essential component of the cultural heritage of the French Community, will continue to be preserved and valorised. Their digitisation shall be the object of a specific plan associating the RTBF, the French Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community's Commission. The archive could be given added value within the framework of the promotion of the digitisation of television through the organisation of a specific channel. "

As far as concerns plastic arts and museums, the declaration of Community Policy underpins the necessity to digitally archive the collections of the French Community.

A prospective study to digitise heritage

The adhesion to the MINERVA program by the departments of the French Community has enabled the general identification for museums and archives of the needs and wants of those sectors.

The computerisation of these institutions and associations being relatively recent, the diversity of existing formats and software is, as a consequence,





Hubert en Jan Van Eyck,
De Aanbidding van het Lam Gods (detail), 1432
St. Bavo's Cathedral of Ghent
Photo: Hugo Maertens
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Museum of Natural Sciences, Brussels, interior view
© Federal Science Policy

rather limited, yielding an obvious advantage in obtaining a uniformity of practices and systems.

First, the Ministry of the French Community of Belgium has endeavoured to define the concept of "heritage fund" in function of the various collections it manages and to inventory them. These collections have been classified and a hierarchy has been drawn up as regards their quality and their intrinsic value, and also as concerns their inventory and already existing or not digitisation. In this regard, two pilot departments (the Musée royal de Mariemont, scientific institution of the French Community, and the Department for Plastic Arts of the General Department for Culture) have been entrusted with the identification of the required steps and procedures to launch a digitisation program that can match the requirements of the MINERVA program, while taking account of budget limitations. The long-term aim is to extend them to other museums in the French Community. This first analysis has already allowed us to refocus some digitisation projects already implemented by museum federations outside the Ministry towards European norms established by the MINERVA project. This also holds true for some museum portals.

Second, a first series of technical, human and budget needs has been identified for both pilot projects and a proposal of common methodology has been adopted as well as a systematic exchange of information about the digitisation process.

A study project regarding the definition of a computer architecture enabling the realisation of a cross-sectoral approach to information exploitation from the various existing systems and software in order to create a common portal is currently submitted to a special institution (Etnic) of the French Community created to support and orient the computer policy.

A project for archive departments and documentation centres

The "Pallas" software, conceived for the description, the indexing, the management and the research of documents, the location determination of archive documents, allows among other things advanced technological research thanks to an elaborate and clearly established nomenclature. "Pallas" is first and foremost an integrated system of management and consultation for archive departments and documentation centres. It is based on advanced technology, respects the latest description standards and has been conceived to allow the online research and treatment of information via Internet and intranet access. Several institutions managing archive heritage have already been entrusted with this software, the acknowledged Archive centres of the French Community, the architecture pole of la Cambre www.lacambre.be, the archivage of the Cirque d'hiver, as well as the écomusée du Centre www.ecomuseeboisduluc.be

3. German-speaking Community

Because of its little territory and its geographical position at 3 borders between Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg and the language-border with the French community of Belgium, the most of projects in the German-speaking Community are in national and normally in international framework.

His own projects are the re-launch of his official website (www.dglive.be) in spring 2004 and the launch of a virtual library in December 2003 with the particularity that this virtual mediacatalogue combines public access libraries and school-libraries so as well specialised libraries like those of the Pedagogical High-School (www.mediadg.be).

An other project will be the creation of a virtual museum in which the collection of the Community will take the most important place.

4. Federal Science Policy

The Federal Government adopted in April 2004 the principle of a *ten-year digitisation plan of the scientific and cultural heritage held by the Federal Scientific Establishments* (FSEs). Sixty projects have been identified in the FSE's (Royal Library and State Archives; Museums of Fine Arts, Museums of Art and History and Institute of Artistic Heritage; Institute of Natural Sciences and Museum of Central Africa; Royal Observatory, Meteorological Institute and Institute of Space Aeronomy) and in the Royal Film Archives. The plan was set up as a result of a broad study made by an external consultant with the active collaboration of the institutions. A global and collective approach to a large-scale digitisation of the collections will be followed, taking into account the individual constraints and priorities, and the specificities of each institution. The budget could amount a maximum of 150 million euros for ten years (2005-2014), half of the budget being supported by the Federal Science Policy department and the institutions themselves, the other part being supported by a loan that would be asked to the European Investment Bank. The Government decided that the loan should be reimbursed by the institutions. A complementary study was carried out (September 2004-January 2005) in order to evaluate the potential commercial return that could be generated by the digitisation projects and could allow the reimbursement of the proposed loan. It has been shown that the commercial incomes would only cover a very limited part of the loan. The possibility to find complementary financial means needs to be further examined. Anyway,

a first phase of the digitisation plan will start in 2005 with the already available budget (Federal Science Policy and the institutions) and several high-priority projects will be launched. The projects will cover three levels: provide access (catalogs), provide objects (digitized images) and provide knowledge (metadata).

Multiannual Information Society Support Programme (2001-2008). The Programme is implemented by the Federal Science Policy department and backs up the various initiatives taken elsewhere. Its aim is to stimulate the use of information technologies in target sectors through application projects. The technologies concern the complete array of tools for, e.g., digitizing, processing, exchanging and disseminating information of all kinds, emphasizing what is actually at stake with respect to the interoperability of existing systems. The programme has a multiannual budget (2001-2008) of EUR 15.2 million. For the FSEs, the programme gives the preference to projects that use a cooperative approach to tackle the digitisation of these highly specialised establishments' collections and information holdings with the purpose of ensuring their conservation and facilitating their use.



Jacques Lennep, *Rik Wouters passion*, 1995
© Ministry of the French Community

What is more, in line with the European initiatives taken in this area, it is expected to see the development of innovative application projects on accessing this heritage, especially when it comes to access for users outside the FSEs themselves, that is, the scientific community, education sector, the broad public, etc. The projects are carried out in partnership with technical and/or academic service providers. As a result of two calls for proposals issued in 2000 and in 2002, nine projects involve FSEs. These projects can be seen as preparatory bricks for the ten-year digitisation plan.

Co-operation

It includes the following sections:

- National networks
- International co-operation
- NRG and MINERVA results, interpretation and impact

General

The current national situation characterised by development, does not always allow the results to be put into practice yet. In this respect, translation of the information provided is a need and we believe a detailed list of interesting policy tools would be useful to the different member states who are still developing a national digitisation policy.

We also consider the progress report a useful document, but one that could be published less frequently, as most evolutions take place in the long term and therefore could as well be reported every two years for instance.

Whatever the case, the ad hoc Consultation Group for the follow-up of the Lund action plan at the Belgian level, – constituted of representatives from the Ministry of the Flemish Community, the Ministry of the French

Community, the Ministry of the German-Speaking Community and the Scientific and Technical Information Service (STIS), a department of the Federal Science Policy Board –, is programming to set up a work group of experts from various institutions in order, in a first period, to establish the necessary contacts between the diverse Belgian players in the field of the cultural and scientific heritage.

1. Flemish Community

As mentioned in the previous Progress report, cross-sectoral dialogue and networking exists in Flanders on a national and international level.

At the moment, most of the national networks arise rather ad hoc, for instance in the framework of research or policy development. In 2004, the Commission Flanders-Netherlands, in the frame of the Cultural Treaty between Flanders and the Netherlands, originated a project about cultural heritage. Subject is the different levels of cooperation. The project will result in the organisation of a conference in 2006. Several working groups, composed of representatives of Flanders and the Netherlands (from both policy and institutions in the field), are active. One of the groups focuses on digitisation. In this working group different themes are discussed: value of cooperation, setting of standards, exchange of good and bad practices, possible cooperation in publishing magazines, education, ... MediaNet Flanders recently launched a research project on digital archiving through the IBBT (also with input of the Dutch institution Beeld en Geluid (Sound & Image)). Medianet Flanders is a network between certain contentproviders (broadcasting services and publishing), ICT-companies, distributors and the government (IWT and Media administration).



As for the NRG and MINERVA results, they are communicated in Flanders to a range of actors working within and outside the field of cultural heritage.

2. French Community

Networks: the AICIM Project (Computerised Access to the Collections of Museum Institutions - Accès informatisé aux Collections des Institutions muséales)

This project of computerised access to the collections of museum institutions began in 2001 in partnership with the association "Musées et Société en Wallonie". It today takes the shape of a virtual net bringing together almost seventy Walloon and Brussels museums from all heritage departments (Archaeology, Art, History, Ethnology, Science, Techniques, Natural Sciences). The main objectives of this project are the establishment of inventory standards, the digitisation and the dissemination via an online database with all major works of museum collections (www.aicim.be). On a larger scale, the AICIM project aims at sensitising museums to the utilisation of NICT and to favour the usage of new communication practices as intellectual and cultural approaches. In the future, the AICIM network will continue to sensitise institutions to the importance of the inventory mission, and will also try to match the standards established by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative.

Next will come the valorisation of this work and the adaptation of communication to the type of user (professional of the museum sector or the public at large).

Co-operation between European regions for a museum portal

The Museum portal of the Grande Région was created by the Museum Association

of the Grande Région within the framework of Luxembourg 2007. Among other things, it meets the objective of presenting the museums of the Grande Région. Are currently participating in the Museum portal: Lorraine, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, the German-Speaking Community of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg ...

Its objective is to produce the vision of a cultural heritage generating development. In this context, intended is the amelioration of working conditions and opportunities of museums in conjunction with the will to show what is exceptional in these regions.

NRG and MINERVA Results

The results of the activities of the MINERVA project have received wide and systematic diffusion with all players of the cultural and scientific heritage in the French Community. Adhesion to the objectives of the MINERVA project has been growing as well as the attention devoted to standardised norms meeting the aims of interoperability at the international level.

Within the MINERVA project, the Ministry of the French Community of Belgium co-ordinates the work group for the Quality of cultural websites. As a reminder, the initiative of quality criteria for cultural websites had been launched under the Belgian presidency of the European Union, among other things through the Brussels Quality Framework. The aim of this MINERVA workgroup is to provide cultural institutions with European tools for their online communication (www.cfwb.be/quality-brussels, www.minervaeurope.org). The diffusion within the French Community will be effected namely via the training department for cultural institutions, the program of which will comprise lectures on the *Cultural Website Quality Principles* and their

explicative handbook *Quality Principles for Cultural Websites: a Handbook*.

The French Community also disseminated the reflexions resulting from various works of the MINERVA working groups to other initiatives such as the workshop of the EPOCH Project (Sixth Framework Programme) related to "Expectations of Cultural Heritage professionals" hold in Brussels in October 2004.

3. German-speaking Community

National network

The German-speaking Community intends to participate at programs for preserving his audiovisual heritage in accordance with futures projects in the French Community or with its public broadcaster RTBF.

Co-operation between European regions for a museum portal and a culture portal

Like the French Community, the German-speaking Community is participating at the museum portal created by the Museum Association of the "Grande Région" and in an other project in the same region: the framework between 17 partners to establish a culture portal with the following items: culture guide, culture atlas with interactive navigation, culture agenda, online-ticket-service and a project-database.

4. Federal Science Policy

The accompanying committee for the preparation of the digitisation plan of the Federal Scientific Establishments is composed of representatives of all institutions and of the Federal Science Policy department. Participation of the FSEs in various projects and networks of the FP5 and FP6, and in other

international cooperative projects and networks. The MINERVA results are regularly disseminated in the FSEs via the web portal "DIGIPAT" and the e-list "EUROFED" of the Scientific and Technical Information Service, and by direct contacts in the institutions.

Main digitisation initiatives

It includes the following sections:

- National portals for culture/networked digital repositories
- Services for the users
- Emerging initiatives

1. Flemish Community

A few evolutions can be mentioned with regard to portal sites in Flanders. At the moment a portal site on heritage is being worked on for instance. The Flemish Art Collection (www.vlaamsekunstcollectie.be) and the Archives Bank (www.archiefbank.be) are also setting up portals.

The Guide to Associations (www.verenigingswijzer.be) is a digital platform where different actors of popular culture can meet and exchange expertise.

CultureNet Flanders recently launched the Cultuurdatabank Vlaanderen (the culture database Flanders) and will launch in 2005 the new cultural portal www.cultuurweb.be.

Within the comprehensive and integrate cultural heritage policy, the Flemish Community concludes heritage covenants with the local authorities. This allows local authorities to lay their own accents on their cultural heritage policy. They tend to focus



on digitisation projects, such as the development of image banks (www.beelddbankgent.be, www.beelddbankmechelen.be, etc.).

Furthermore, integrated sources are digitised and opened up via the Internet (www.historischebronnenbrugge.be).

The Move Project (Musea Oost-Vlaanderen in Evolutie, Museums of East Flanders in Evolution: www.oost-vlaanderen.be/cultuur/musea/move/), is a project which aims at promoting and standardising the inventory of objects in museums and at publishing it on the web by creating a central catalogue of objects in museums of the province East-Flanders.

With regard to the immovable heritage, the following initiatives can be highlighted:

- The Central Archaeological Inventory, in short "CAI", is an inventory of all known archaeological sites in Flanders. All information is registered in an Internet-based database and GIS system (geographical information system). Various partners participate in the CAI project: the Flemish Institute for Immovable Heritage, five Flemish provinces, the Ghent University, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the archaeological services of the cities of Ghent, Bruges and Antwerp, the Waasland Archaeological Service, the Kale Leie Archaeological Service and the Archaeological Service of the Antwerpse Kempen and the Monuments and Sites Division of the Flemish Community. As the CAI itself can only be consulted by the partners of the project, a user-friendly and educational version has been developed for the public at large: the so-called CAI public section:
www.monument.vlaanderen.be/cai/nl/index.html, cai.erfgoed.net/cai_publiek/

- 'Bouwen door de eeuwen heen' is a compact inventory of the architectural heritage in Flanders. Apart from a protection tool, it is an excellent guide to the architecture of a region. It provides per municipality, street, square or site, a historical introduction and a status quo with regard to the built-up neighbourhood. It systematically lists the most important elements of every building, which are necessary for a better analysis and understanding of the possible evolving chronology. As to complex buildings, attention was paid to the location and the orientation of the various elements. The inventory is digitally available at www.monument.vlaanderen.be/vioe/nl/index.html. The protected immovable heritage can be consulted at the following website as well: www.monument.vlaanderen.be/aml/nl/index.html
- The landscape atlas is the inventory of the landscape in Flanders from a cultural-historical point of view. At the moment, the landscape inventory project consists of two parts which are entirely complementary. The landscape atlas is the inventory of the relics of the traditional landscapes. It is a scientifically supported inventory covering the entire landscape as it is at the beginning of the 21st century. The emphasis is put on the inventory of the landscape characteristics of heritage value and of supra-local importance. The spatial landscape characteristics map is the complementary inventory of the spatial aspects. You can find the digital results of this inventory in the geographical window Landscape Atlas. The landscape atlas indicates where the historically grown landscape structure – the 'relics of the traditional landscapes' – has remained recognisable till today.
www.gisvlaanderen.be/geo-vlaanderen/landschapsatlas/

The Flemish Institute for Immovable Heritage has set up digital thematic sites on the following subjects:

The organ

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/orgel/index.htm

Post-war architecture: the Renaat Braem house

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/braem/index.htm

World heritage Bruges

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/brugge/index.htm

World heritage beguinages

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/begijnhof/index.htm

World heritage belfries

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/belfort/index.htm

Sailing heritage Mercator

www.monument.vlaanderen.be/mercator/index.htm

2. French Community

The "Culture Portal" project of the French Community

The "Culture Portal" project of the French Community has been the object of a reflective activity during 2004 with the objective of facilitating the access to the departments of the General Direction for Culture of the Ministry of the French Community. The aim is to bring together all these departments towards a convergence point under one heading, the aim being not to work with an institutional approach but a cross-sectoral one by organising the multitude of available or coming information on the sites of the various Departments. This portal is now reaching completion of its first phase. It should be put online in 2005.

Partnership between the Cinémathèque de la Communauté française (Film Library of the French Community of Belgium), the RTBF and the Médiathèque (Media Library)

The objective of this partnership is to develop a centre for archive consultation, within which other funds could be integrated. Furthermore, since 2003 already, the Cinémathèque continues to digitise its film heritage containing more than 8.000 hours of programs, essentially pedagogical productions and documentaries produced by great names of the Belgian filmed press and documentary.

PROJECTS

Walloon Digital Incubator

This projet, which is still in study, aims at constituting an exchange point in the field of multimedia, at both national and international levels.
www.awt.be/web/img/index.aspx?page=img_fr,
100,000,000

Thematic channel

The availability of a thematic channel is currently being considered in order to show the full value of audio-visual archives in the French Community.

REALISATIONS

«Bruxelles nous appartient». ("Brussels Is Ours")

It's an online database diffusing "a memory of Brussels", narrated by its inhabitants. It is a living, participative and creative archive. This "BNA-BBOT" project endeavours to create a sound memory of the City Brussels. It is, among others, supported by the Ministry of the French Community.

www.bna-bbot.be

Filmlibrary.tv

Finally, and within the framework of services to the users, Filmlibrary.tv presents itself as a portal with audio-visual content from various international interested parties most of which are from the European Union. In the French Community of Belgium, there are three interested parties (Belgavox, the French Radio-Television in Belgium and RTL-TVi); this service is provided under a Business-2-Business shape for the trade of audio-visual contents between professionals of the sector.

www.filmlibrary.tv

Digitisation of the mediaeval manuscripts of Tournai

The digitisation of 27 mediaeval manuscripts of the Town of Tournai has been realised to allow consultation of ancient manuscripts by a large audience.

3. Federal Science Policy

The Scientific and Technical Information Service (STIS) operates a portal called DIGIPAT (digipat.stis.fgov.be/). The portal is divided in 4 sections providing information on, and links to: the European initiatives on digitization; STIS Report on digital preservation; the Belgian federal scientific institutions that conserve and valorize federal digital heritage; heritage websites in Belgium and abroad; documents. The STIS produced (June 2004) an information note on the long-term preservation of the digital heritage. The information note provides an overview of the research performed in the field, and of good practices, experiences, recommendations,... which result from the many projects, experiments and initiatives running at this moment in Europe and in the whole world. A list of the most important information sources was drawn up. The document is available on the DIGIPAT website.



Andre Eijberg, *Paysanne*, 1997
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