

## Digitisation Coordination Initiative

Rolling agenda  
Key steps 1999-2005

### Rolling agenda

The NRG activated a mechanism of unfailing institutional cooperation among the rotating Presidencies, the “rolling agenda”. The initiative is co-chaired by the European Commission and the country that holds the Presidency of the European Union at the time of the meetings. All Member States bring to the table their points of view, experiences and competencies. The Presidency in turn fixes some key priorities and proposes objectives for its semester. This assures continuity and more effectiveness to the actions undertaken, sustain to the efforts over a lengthy period of time, and improves the coordination mechanisms. Starting with the French Presidency in 2000 each successive Presidency provides support, hosts the NRG meeting and expert workshops, and up-dates the Lund Action Plan.

Since 2003 the Italian Presidency has established a set of joint-activities with both the Irish (in particular about the “Assessment Plan”) and the Dutch Presidencies on the topic of the long term preservation of the digital memory (e.g. the “Firenze agenda”). The Luxembourg and United Kingdom presidencies will focus their efforts in particular on new proposals for a renewed Lund Action Plan and the sustainability of the NRG.

[www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/meetings.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/meetings.htm)

### France

The French Presidency was instrumental in identifying specific objectives included in eEurope Action Plan that aimed at making digitised resources more visible and commonly accessible. They underlined the importance of digitisation as a primary building block for the development of the information society.

### Sweden

The main results of the Swedish Presidency were the Lund Principles & Action Plan. In Lund expert representatives from Member States agreed on basic issues and the first steps needed to build a coordination framework based on the benchmarking model.

### Belgium

The Resolutions on “Culture in the knowledge society” and on “The role of culture in the development of the European Union”, adopted by the Culture Council under the Belgian Presidency, and the results of the informal Council held in Bruges on 4-5 December, 2001 endorsed the importance of encouraging the visibility and diversity of the common European heritage, and of providing quality and equality of access for all citizens to this heritage through the use of new technologies. Experts meetings, convened under the Presidency, resulted in the launch of a specific initiative: the “Brussels Quality Framework” on accessibility and

quality of Web sites for cultural content.

On 11 December 2001, the National Representatives Group (NRG) was set up, establishing its mission in the Terms of Reference (ToR).

### **Spain**

During the Spanish Presidency, a Council Resolution by the European Council on the preservation of the digital memory was adopted (2002/C 162/02). This recognised the importance of sustainable approaches to safeguarding both born-digital and digitised resources and the role of the memory institutions in this process. The Presidency in addition to the NRG meeting in Alicante also hosted a workshop on "Digitisation good practises", which provided an exchange forum based on the 42 first examples of projects from different Member States.

### **Denmark**

The NRG meeting under the Danish Presidency focused primarily on the National Reports, produced by each representative and presented in the first NRG report, as well as future strategies for the NRG to carry on in its coordination efforts. A workshop on "Preservation of the digital memory" was attended by a number of experts from all Member States and other countries.

### **Greece**

For the first time two Presidencies, the Greek and the Italian, prepared a joint plan for 12 months of activities to maximise the productivity and impact of the initiative. The programme included the following priorities: consolidating the NRG position; quality for cultural Web sites; good practice promotion; enlargement of the MINERVA network towards both New Accession States (NAS) and small or local institutions and authorities; benchmarking results presentation; digital memory preservation. Under the Greek Presidency the NRG meeting was held in Corfu in conjunction with a workshop on 'digitisation and preservation of the culture heritage'. Of particular interest was the 'meeting of networks', where all the main European networks in the field of digitisation and preservation of culture heritage were present.

### **Italy**

Following the Greek semester, and in line with the 12 month programme, the Italian Presidency initiated some additional actions. The first is the "Charter of Parma" a strategic document to consolidate the NRG position and collect consensus by the user communities and by cultural authorities. The second concerned the quality of cultural Web sites, where a Handbook was presented to the NRG for approval. In addition, the New Accession States (NAS) were officially invited to join the NRG group. Russia and Israel were present as observers. On digital memory preservation the

"Firenze agenda" proposes a set of practical and concrete actions to be carried out in 12-18 months with the support of the future Presidencies. The 5<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting organised in Parma brought together for the first time 27 countries. A particular emphasis was given to presentations from the 10 New Accession States, and from Russia and Israel. In conjunction with the NRG meeting a major Conference on quality for cultural Web sites was hosted. The importance and relevance of the topic was made evident when the meeting attracted more than 800 participants from all over the world.

### **Ireland**

During the period January to June 2004, Ireland presided over the European Union and consequently hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting in Dublin Castle on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. On the following day, a very successful international digitisation conference "Access all areas: serving the user" was held at the same venue. Both events were hosted by the Irish Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in co-operation with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the National Museum of Ireland. The "Access all areas" conference was attended by the delegates from the NRG meeting, as well as local, national and international representatives from the cultural heritage areas of libraries, museums and archives. Cultural Heritage Project team members presented a preview of the new version of Ireland's exciting portal website *AskAboutIreland* ([www.askaboutireland.ie](http://www.askaboutireland.ie)).

During the Irish Presidency, the *Interim Report of the Progress Assessment of the Coordination of Digitisation in Europe* was presented to the 6<sup>th</sup> NRG Meeting. This report reviews the progress of the Lund Action Plan to date and makes recommendations for its continuation into the future. Following discussion at the NRG meeting, a Task Force for the Future of the Coordination Initiative was established to discuss and plan the long-term sustainability of the digitization coordination between Member States.

### **Netherlands**

The Netherlands Presidency initiated the process to revisit the Lund Principles and the Action Plan, as well as the current organisation of the coordination initiative. Building on the EU added-value position paper<sup>1</sup> that was presented in Parma by the Netherlands national representative, a conference was held in The Hague on 15 and 16 September. Theme of the conference was the building of a European Area of Digital Cultural Resources. The conference addressed the quality and organisation of such an area and the strategic issues involved as well as current European assets and achievements, common viewpoints, and future actions and policies. A report of the conference<sup>2</sup> including the 7<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting conclusions<sup>3</sup> was produced and distributed to all participants

and NRG members in December 2004.

A Building Blocks document was prepared by the Netherlands EU Presidency in cooperation with the Taskforce for the future of the Coordination Initiative to prepare discussion on the future organisation of NRG and MINERVA. The document proved a valuable input for the meeting and will be used as reference for future discussion.

All official NRG members participated in a Group Decision Support Session preceding the 7<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting. The outcomes were presented to all NRG members. A comprehensive report<sup>4</sup> was made available for internal NRG use.

The Netherlands EU Presidency supported the ongoing activities of the Firenze expert workgroup on long term preservation. The expert workgroup, with the support of the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico in Rome, improved the community awareness, consensus and participation. The Netherlands EU Presidency presented the progress of the activities during the conference in The Hague on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September.

Two strategic reports were produced: a detailed position paper<sup>5</sup> draws the current worldwide scenario and future possible strategies through identification of priorities and recommendations at the European level. An additional questionnaire responses summary<sup>6</sup> presents a synthetic survey about the main on-going

initiatives across Europe.

Moreover, in the 7<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting, a presentation was held on top-level generic domains, which make it possible to assess the origin, quality, and trustworthiness of internet resources. Ambiguity of top level domain names can not be solved by current instruments, such as resource location tools (e.g. Google). Top level domains like '.museum'<sup>7</sup> have the opportunity to create an area / domain of guaranteed trustworthy digital sources. On 16 November 2004 the Council of the European Union agreed on a Work Plan for 2005-2006<sup>8</sup> that aims at an operational follow up in terms of addressees, tasks and timeframe and should lead to concrete results. It stressed that in setting future political priorities, the Council will aim at focussing on five priorities to be achieved and implemented in the years 2005 and 2006. Throughout these years the Presidencies will guarantee a continuous and sustainable follow up. One of the Council's five priorities for 2005-2006 is the coordination of digitisation of heritage. It should support citizens with unrestricted, sustainable and reliable digital access to Europe's cultural heritage, and also the move towards a digital Europe with rapid sharing of cultural knowledge, contributing to the establishment of a knowledge economy. The Council agreed on the following actions:

actor	action	result	timetable
Council, Member States European Commission	Proceed with coordination through a dynamic action plan after 2005 (follow up of Lund action plan)	Action plan	second half 2005
Member States	Translate commitment into a more defined and stable organization in order to assure significance and output	Transformation of National Representatives Groups as informal network into a strong European cooperative group with clear function and range	second half 2005
European Commission	strategically integrate digitisation with different sectors (culture, education, technology research)	Report on European Community support for digitisation	second half 2005

<sup>1</sup> See [www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/positionpaper031115.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/positionpaper031115.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Find the complete conference report at [www.digitaliseringerfgoed.nl/](http://www.digitaliseringerfgoed.nl/)

<sup>3</sup> See [www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/thehague040917.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/thehague040917.htm)

<sup>4</sup> For a management summary see page XXVI of this Status Report

<sup>5</sup> See page XXXIX of this Status Report

<sup>6</sup> See page XXX of this Status Report

<sup>7</sup> For more information see <http://about.museum/>

<sup>8</sup> Doc. 13839/04, cult 102. See [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/82695.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/82695.pdf)

## United Kingdom

The UK assumes the Presidency of the EU in July 2005. The UK Presidency will be working closely with the Netherlands and Luxembourg Presidencies on the Dynamic Action Plan for the CAC. It is anticipated that the Plan will be discussed within the CAC and adopted during the UK Presidency, and that this will be a major focus of activity. The UK Presidency will also be discussing how the Action Plan will be taken forward under the Austrian and Finland Presidencies. The UK Presidency has identified that the use and re-use of cultural resources, particularly in an educational context, will be a major focus of the UK Presidency Conference. This will be held in Bristol in November 2005, and will look in detail at how the cultural sector can support eLearning initiatives, at both Member State and European levels. It will be followed by a meeting of the NRG that will be looking at the issues of implementing the Dynamic Action Plan. Also being held at the same time will be a major conference to explore the issues addressed by the MICHAEL project, including increasing access to cultural content to celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity and building closer links with tourism, research and the creative industries. The UK Conference and NRG meeting will be practical and pragmatic. The basic functions of the NRG must be sustained by Member States themselves. But the NRG must also look to ways of developing initiatives within the context of the Dynamic Action Plan that bring European-level added value to Member State initiatives. This principle has already been demonstrated in the development of the MICHAEL project. Increasing interest within Member States of the value of cultural content for new media industries, research and learning demonstrates that value that can be built by developing the idea of the continuum of Digital Heritage – a European Area of Digital Cultural Resources developed by the Netherlands Presidency.

## Key steps 1999-2005

### 1999

The European Commission launches the initiative eEurope-An information society for all

### 4 April 2001

Lund Principles & Action Plan

### 17 July 2001

Workshop on "Internet & culture, experts meeting on European Cultural Heritage on the Web"

### September 2001

EC Communication on "Accessibility of Public Web Sites" COM(2001) 529, Brussels, 25.09.2001

### 11 December 2001

Brussels, 1<sup>st</sup> National Representatives Group (NRG) meeting organised by the Belgian Presidency

### December 2001

*Brussels Quality Framework*, for accessibility and quality of websites for cultural content developed in cooperation with the Belgian Presidency

### January 2002

Council Resolutions 2002/C C32/01 e C32/02 on "Culture in the knowledge society" and "Role of culture in the development of the European Union"

### 1 March 2002

The MINERVA thematic network project started

### 6 May 2002

Alicante, 2<sup>nd</sup> NRG meeting organised by the Spanish Presidency

### 17 May 2002

Alicante, Workshop on "Digitisation good practices" organised by the Spanish Presidency and MINERVA project

### September 2002

Council Resolution 2002/C 162/02 on "Preserving tomorrow's memory - preserving digital content for future generations"

### 10 December 2002

Copenhagen, 3<sup>rd</sup> NRG meeting organised by the Danish Presidency

### 11 December 2002

Copenhagen, workshop on "Preservation of digital memory" organised by the Danish Presidency and the MINERVA project

### 26 June 2003

Corfu, 4<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting organised under the coordination of the Greek Presidency

### 27-28 June 2003

Corfu, workshop on "Digitisation of Cultural Content", organised by the Greek Presidency and the MINERVA project

### 16-17 October 2003

Florence, International conference on "Long Term Preservation of Digital Memories" organised by the Italian Presidency

### October 2003

The Firenze agenda

### 19 November 2003

Parma, 5<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting organised under the coordination of the Italian Presidency

### November 2003

The *Charter of Parma*

### 20-21 November 2003

Parma, International conference "Quality for cultural Websites", organised by the Italian Presidency and the MINERVA project

### 1 February 2004

The MINERVAplus project is launched

### 28 June 2004

Dublin, 6<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting organised under the coordination of the Irish Presidency

### 29 June 2004

Dublin, international conference on "Access all areas: serving the user" examining cultural portals from an end-user perspective, organised by the Irish Presidency and the MINERVA project

### 17 September 2004

The Hague 7<sup>th</sup> NRG meeting is organised under the coordination of the Dutch Presidency

### 15-16 September 2004

The Hague, European Conference "Towards a continuum of digital heritage. Strategies for a European area of digital cultural resources", organised by the Dutch Presidency and the MINERVA project