

Report of the NRG Group Decision Support Session

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Management summary

Introduction

On 16th and 17th September the Netherlands EU Presidency hosted the 7th meeting of the members of the National Representatives Group (NRG) for the coordination of digitisation in Europe (Lund). On the evening of 16th September all official NRG members joined a "Group Decision Support Session".¹ They were asked to give their ideas and opinions on the future organisation of the European coordination initiative. A working document "Building blocks for possible new organisational models" provided the group with background information.

The agenda of the "Group Decision Support Session" followed the following steps:

1. Which are the main obstacles and impediments for a European area of digital cultural resources?
2. Which of those need a European approach, and should this approach be formal or informal?
3. Regarding the European coordination actions, what instruments are seen as most effective and what are the most natural actors?
4. What can be concluded regarding a future role for NRG and/or the MINERVA project?

1. Which are the main obstacles and impediments for a European area of digital cultural resources?

The first subject raised in the GDS-session concerned the obstacles that form a barrier to arrive at a European area of digital cultural resources. The respondents were presented a predefined list of 19 obstacles and were asked to add a maximum of two (2) obstacles to that list. This resulted in a gross list containing 56 items (obstacles). This list was presented to the respondents again and they were asked:

1. to indicate a) the importance and b) urgency of the obstacles;
2. whether the obstacles could be tackled best at EU level or not;
3. in case obstacles should be tackled at EU level, whether this should be done in a formal or informal approach.

Importance and urgency of obstacles

The below table shows the top-7 obstacles with the highest average importance and urgency.

Top 7 of obstacles with high importance and high urgency	Importance	Urgency	Sum (Items)
Lack of national strategy and funding	3,71	4,13	7,84
Lack of focus on user needs, wants and requirements	3,96	3,79	7,75
Lack of coordination in the countries	3,79	3,67	7,46
Fragmented funding mechanisms and funding objectives	3,83	3,54	7,37
Missing an established official state policy	3,58	3,63	7,21
Lack of cooperation between institution on national level	3,88	3,33	7,21
Not enough financial support from the EU	3,58	3,58	7,16

The table shows that:

- 5 of the top-7 obstacles refer to obstacles on the national level
- The obstacles scoring significant on either of the criteria refer more than often to:
 - Missing an established, official and common policy or strategy

- Obstacles in the field of co-ordination and co-operation
- Obstacles in financing and funding

In the table below the top 7 issues, and some additional issues, are presented under the heading of the above mentioned three groups:

¹ A group decision support session (GDS-session) is an ICT-supported meeting and/or brainstorm session

Cluster	Obstacles	Importance	Urgency	Sum (Items)
Missing policy or strategy	Lack of national strategy and funding	3,71	4,13	7,84
	Missing an established official state policy	3,58	3,63	7,21
	Missing a real common policy underlined by European legal framework	3,63	3,17	6,8
Co-ordination or co-operation	Lack of coordination in the countries	3,79	3,67	7,46
	Lack of cooperation between institution on national level	3,88	3,33	7,21
	Gap between European guidelines and vision and real situation of institutions, cultural heritage sector in member states (lack of national funding)	3,63	3,38	7,01
	Lack of cooperation between the memory institutions	3,58	3,33	6,91
	Lack of synergies between cultural and new technologies programmes/policy drivers	3,46	3,35	6,81
Financing and funding	Fragmented funding mechanisms and funding objectives	3,83	3,54	7,37
	Not enough financial support from the EU	3,58	3,58	7,16
	Lack of funds to initiate digitisation - lack of funds to sustain digitised archives	3,42	3,42	6,84

2. Which of the obstacles need a European approach, and should this approach be formal or informal?

The respondents were presented a short list of the Top-27 obstacles in importance and urgency. They were asked if a given obstacle was to be tackled best at EU level

or not by marking an item with Yes, No or Abstain.

The table below presents the results. The significant results "Yes", indicating the respondents find that the obstacle is best tackled at EU level is marked yellow

Rank	Top-10 Obstacle to be tackled best at EU level?	Yes	No	Abstain
7	Not enough financial support	95,8	4,2	0,0
20	Lack of cultural dimension in IST or FP-programmes	91,7	8,3	0,0
21	Lack of operational goals	91,7	8,3	0,0
26	Dichotomy between directions from DG-EAC and DG-IST	91,7	4,2	4,2
15	Missing a real common policy underlined by European legal framework	87,5	12,5	0,0
24	Minimum of promotion of multilingualism	87,5	12,5	0,0
2	Lack of focus on user needs, wants and requirements	87,5	12,5	0,0
10	Gap between European guidelines and vision vs. real situation of institutions, cultural heritage sector in member states (lack of national funding)	83,3	16,7	0,0
17	Lack of standards	83,3	16,7	0,0
4	Fragmented funding mechanisms and funding objectives	83,3	12,5	4,2

Having a closer look at the results shows that:

- 20 out of the Top-27 obstacles are considered by 66,7% or more of the respondents to be tackled at EU level
- The obstacles to be tackled at the EU level cover a wide range

The tables below show the obstacles to be tackled on EU level in a formal approach and the obstacles to be tackled on the EU level in an informal approach.

Obstacle to be tackled at EU level in a formal approach

Lack of cultural dimension in IST or FP-programmes
Not enough financial support
Missing a real common policy underlined by European legal framework
Lack of legal framework
Dichotomy between directions from DG-EAC and DG-IST
Lack of funds to initiate digitisation - lack of funds to sustain digitised archives
Lack of operational goals at the European level
Fragmented funding mechanisms and funding objectives
Poor matching of current Intellectual property rights with the requirements of the key players in the digital domain

Obstacle to be tackled at EU level in an informal approach

Lack of synergies between cultural and new technologies programmes/policy drivers
No recognition that cultural institutions can contribute significantly to the eContent industry
Lack of focus on user needs, wants and requirements
Lack of cross-domain (archives, libraries museums) searching aids
Lack of analysis of impacts to the society of digitised cultural heritage
Lack of expertise and skills within institutions
Not enough networking of the countries
Gap between European guidelines and vision and real situation of institutions, cultural heritage sector in member states (lack of national funding)
Lack of models and good practice for cost reduction

3. Regarding the European coordination actions, what instruments are seen as most effective and what are the most natural actors?

In the first two questions we have collected a number of obstacles that form a barrier to arrive at a European area of digital cultural resources. The second question selected these barriers into those that need a formal approach and those that can be resolved in an informal manner. In the third question, the participants were presented 15 "instruments" to act upon these barriers, ranging from "discussion" and "recommendation" to "making a legal statement" and "sanctioning". These 15 instruments were in the question connected to 7 possible actors that could take action. The actors range from the "individual member states" and "intergovernmental institutions" to "the future NRG" and the "European Commission". Which actor should use which policy instrument to overcome the barriers to a European area of digital cultural resources? The participants were asked to answer with YES or NO (with the possibility to abstain). In the table below the overall results are presented as a percentage of participants that appoints an activity to an actor. Scores above 75% are considered to be highly significant in appointing activities to actors and are marked yellow.

% of participants that link actors to actions (abstain = excluded)

	to discuss	Recommendation	Networking
C. Individual member states and their institutions	91,7	83,3	100
A. The European Commission	87,5	91,7	70,8
B. The intergovernmental institutions	87,5	69,6	87,0
E. The future NRG	91,7	91,7	83,3
G. NRG&MINERVA	87,0	82,6	78,3
D. Expert entities	91,7	95,8	87,5
F. Future MINERVA	79,2	79,2	87,5
Total	88,0	85,6	84,9

Conclusions can be drawn from the results presented in the table above concerning 'actors' and concerning 'activities'. Concerning the actors the results show that:

- Considering the amount of activities, the participants expect the most from individual member states and their institutions. The national level is considered to be the main and central level to be responsible for and execute activities, both formal and informal.
- The NRG, together with the expert entities, is to play an important role in discussing and giving recommendations. For those two tasks it discriminates clearly with MINERVA tasks.
- The European Commission is the only level that significantly is appointed the activity 'sanctioning'
- The national level is the only level that significantly is appointed the activities 'facility management' and 'implementation', stressing the strong practical role of the national level.

Concerning the activities it can be concluded that:

- The more formal policy making activities – "recommendation", "reach agreement", "decision making" and "to make a legal statement" – are appointed to 5 levels: the NRG-level, the expert-level, the national level, the European Commission and the intergovernmental organisations. So for the formal European policy making structure, these are the relevant bodies to look at.
- "Sanctioning" is strictly appointed to the European Commission.
- "Advocate", "facility management" and "implementation" are strictly appointed to the national level.

Advise	Preparation of decision making	Monitoring	Reach agreement	Advocate	Research	Decision making	Funding	Facility management	Implementation	To make a legal	Sanctioning	Total
73,9	82,6	91,7	83,3	83,3	95,8	91,7	95,8	82,7	95,8	91,7	66,7	87,7
41,7	65,2	62,5	83,3	41,6	54,2	91,7	100	53,3	45,8	87,5	75,0	69,6
52,2	65,2	36,4	78,3	62,5	21,7	82,6	52,2	36,4	26,1	79,2	30,4	58,3
87,0	78,3	73,9	66,7	52,2	25,0	45,8	12,5	45,5	21,7	12,5	4,2	52,7
73,9	60,9	58,3	58,3	52,2	41,7	43,5	30,4	55,0	38,1	13,0	4,3	51,9
95,8	66,7	45,8	16,7	58,3	91,7	4,2	4,2	30,4	29,2	0,0	4,2	48,2
58,3	47,8	41,7	20,8	37,5	54,2	13,0	17,4	40,9	39,1	0,0	0,0	41,2
68,9	66,7	58,8	58,1	56,6	55,1	53,3	44,8	46,6	42,6	41,0	26,5	

- Some activities are appointed to both the national level and another actor:
 - "Preparation of decision making" are clearly appointed to both the national level and NRG
 - "Funding" is appointed to the national level and the European Commission
 - "Research" is appointed to the national level and expert entities.

4. What can be concluded regarding a future role for NRG and/or the MINERVA project?

The last subject concerned the form and scope of a future European entity for coordination, as successor to the NRG (and the MINERVA project as secretarial body) after 2005. To get an indication of the different opinions about the future role of NRG and MINERVA, the participants were presented again the list containing the coordination actions and a list containing possible European organisational models.

The participants were asked to give an indication "what future European organisational model is most appropriate to conduct each of the activities"?

They could do this by appointing a score ranging from 1 (not a very logic organisation for this kind of action) to 5 (excellent organisation for this kind of action). Also there was the possibility to abstain (A).

A score range from 1 to 5 indicates that scores of 3,5 and higher are considered significant.

Only 2 future roles for NRG and/or MINERVA scored excellent on a number of activities:

- European (formal) network
- European forum

Also the total scores of these 2 roles score

significantly higher than the other roles.

The European network scores the highest average scores and has the peak number of significant scoring roles:

- To discuss
- Networking
- Recommendation
- Advise
- To reach agreement

The European forum scores high the first 4 roles. None of the 9 other possible EU organizational forms reaches a statistically significant score. Thus the mixture between a European network and a European forum seems to be the most aspired form. The question if it should be a "formal" or and "informal" structure, was presented to the participants and the scores show the desire to opt for a formal structure, with the added possibility of an informal method.