



## Foreword

As Minister for Culture and on behalf of the UK presidency of the EU, I am delighted to introduce the fourth edition of 'Coordinating Digitisation in Europe' for the National Representatives Group (NRG). This report presents the many different digitisation activities by Member States who have worked together in the implementation of the Lund action plan since 2001. This year saw the publication of the follow up to the Lund action plan, with the launch of the *Dynamic Action Plan for the EU co-ordination of digitisation of cultural and scientific content* in Bristol. We also heard welcome proposals by France and the European Commission for a European Digital Library.

This is a widespread agreement amongst Member States that we want to make European cultural content and information resources easier and more interesting to use in a multi-cultural and multilingual online environment. There are many obstacles to be over-come, and it is clear that it will take co-ordinated effort by both Member States and the European Commission to achieve this vision, and that the NRG has a very important role to play. It is agreed that European Digital Library should promote cultural identity as a whole, enabling access to the unique materials held in libraries, archives, museums and galleries. The MICHAEL project, which came into being as a spin-off from the MINERVA project and is soon to include 14 countries, will be a real demonstration of the range and breadth of collections from across Europe creating a single European access point.

These cultural resources can boost learning, particularly in our schools, promoting cultural participation and entitlement. New technology is allowing people to use cultural collections in many creative ways, whether by incorporating images in a school or University assignment, photographs in a community archive, or composing their own music to accompany archive films. New technology is allowing people to communicate their views; expertise and responses to materials held in cultural collections and add their own perspectives to those collections more easily.

For all these reasons I was delighted to be asked to launch the *Dynamic Action Plan*, which is laying the foundations to enable digital access by all citizens to the national, regional and local cultural heritage of Europe.

The plan focuses on 4 action areas; users and content, technologies for digitisation, ensuring sustainability and digital preservation. It sets immediate targets for the next 2 years, and establishes ways to measure progress. The *Plan* is short and practical, and is an excellent platform for progress. I am particularly impressed that it recognises the contribution that the cultural sector can make to education, and the value of cultural institutions, small as well as large, and the central role of the audience. This edition of 'Coordinating Digitisation in Europe' is the first to look at activities by Member States in these action areas.

The *Dynamic Action Plan* is the product of hard work led by the three Presidencies - the Netherlands, Luxembourg and United Kingdom with support from all members of the NRG. I would like to thank them for this achievement and also to recognise the support given to the NRG by the MINERVA project, ably co-ordinated by Italy.

This report is a clear demonstration of the fantastic achievements of countries across Europe. I wish the National Representatives Group well on their journey to make Europe's cultural resources available for all.

David Lammy MP  
Minister for Culture