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Summary

This Status Report is the result of the contacts and the exchange of information established between the ministries and administrations responsible for the relevant matters in Belgium.

With a view to allow a co-ordinated approach to NRG related activities an *ad hoc* Consultation Group was set up on the proposal of the French Community's Representative within the NRG in regards of the role of the French Community in the Minerva project (Ministerial Network for valorising activities in digitisation). The co-ordination and the secretariat work are provided by the French Community.

This group is composed of the French Community's Representative in the NRG, Isabelle Dujacquier, the Flemish Community's Representative in the NRG, Debbie Esmans, the German-Speaking Community's Representative in the Cultural Affairs Comity, Edith Bong and the Director of the Scientific and Technical Information Service (STIS), a service of the Federal Science Policy Department, Jean Moulin.

This report offers a view of the activities and perspectives of the Flemish, French, and German-Speaking Communities and of the Federal Science Policy Department.

Policy

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Policy scenario for digitisation

In July 2002 Mrs Debbie Esmans replaced Mrs An Knaeps as the NRG representative for the Flemish Community.

In late September 2002, on the proposal of the NRG representative, it was decided to proceed with the formation of a co-ordination group by the name of Digicult Vlaanderen. The formation of this group was supported by the Culture administration and the Culture cabinet was documented on this initiative. The co-ordination group will meet three to four times a year when convened by the NRG representative, and has as its task:

- Improving opportunities for information gathering, knowledge acquisition and knowledge dissemination in the area of digitisation;
- further stimulating the digitisation debate;
- creating the contacts needed between the different study groups and projects in Europe and Flanders;
- working on a policy context to stimulate creativity and the dissemination of culture via the digital path.

The group met for the first time early in November 2002.

To date in Culture there has been no digitisation programme to warrant initiatives, but the Flemish cultural authority does support a number of large projects that aim to disseminate cultural and scientific information by digital means. Examples include:

- Archiefbank Vlaanderen: has the objective to create a Flemish register of private archives, similar to existing initiatives in the UK, Australia and the Netherlands;
- Vlacc II / Digitale bibliotheek Vlaanderen: the objective is to develop a single access point for finding information in any of the public libraries in Flanders;
- Cultuurdatabank Vlaanderen: the Culture database project aims to establish a crossroads database in a network of databases. The central core will become an open technical platform, within which all basic

information on the cultural offer in Flanders is stored and exchanged (digitised), with countless other large and small databases. Basic information on the cultural actors, the temporary range (activities, events, courses, etc.), and the permanent range, (general information on a cultural institution, organisation or association), includes all possible primary information. Along with this basic information also belong numerous references to supplementary information, so that these can be quickly retrieved from partner databases. On top of this an extended range of services will be on offer;

- Erfgoednet, one of the pilot projects of Cultuurdatabank Vlaanderen, has the objective to collect, list and digitally publish the complete range of museums, archives and cultural heritage in Flanders (addresses, co-ordinates, general descriptions of their collections and temporary public projects) on the World Wide Web. Information already contained in the databases <http://www.museumsite.be> and <http://www.okvweb.org> will be of use here.

NV Reproductiefonds 'Vlaamse Musea' has also been set up. Reproductiefonds 'Vlaamse Musea' is intended as a scientific, educational and cultural project that provides reproductions (including digitised image material) of Flemish cultural heritage in a professional way, for a fee, for interested parties at home and abroad. The reproduction fund should contribute to a coherent and uniform policy on the commercialisation of reproductions of the country's cultural heritage. The reproduction fund is a point of contact / service centre in the area of creating images; image processing, archiving, order processing, promotion of reproductions and legal problems (reproduction rights, copyrights). An important aspect of how the reproduction fund

operates relates to the digitisation and dissemination of image material. In the long-term, a meta-image bank will be developed to disseminate the digitised material already present.

The Flemish cultural authorities have also created possibilities for facilitating digitisation projects via subsidisation regulations or decrees. In real terms, for example, we can mention the decree on private law cultural archiving. This route can be taken to apply for subsidies for projects to disseminate archives by means of information and communication technology. Information and communication technology is the generic term for all practically applicable computer technology (computerisation and telecommunication) geared towards the processing and exchange of information. Examples include database management systems, Internet browsers, specific archiving programs, etc. Under the museum decree or the dissemination of cultural heritage regulations, project applications can be made in the area of digitisation. The sectors of visual art, audio-visual art, theatre and architecture also have a few projects aimed at digital dissemination, which are funded by the Flemish government. A cultural heritage decree is in preparation.

Terms of reference and National policy profile

The formation of the co-ordination group has already led to a more widespread familiarity with the NRG Terms of reference and the Lund principles, and they are gradually taking shape in practice, in the area of policy and in the cultural sector. Consultations with the Belgian *ad hoc* consultation group have resulted in an agreement to map out the national profile. It was agreed that the *Questionnaire on*



national/regional policies and programmes on digitisation of cultural and scientific content should be filled in. The Digicult Vlaanderen co-ordination group was called in for this, and contact was made with the Department of Education and the Departement of Science, Innovation and Media. With the results new steps can be undertaken.

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

Policy scenario for digitisation

A prospective study for a co-ordinated process of digitisation

In the framework of the follow-up to the Belgian Presidency in the field of "Culture and Knowledge Society" assumed by the French Community during the second half-year 2001, in the framework of the participation of the French Community in the NRG entrusted with the co-ordination of digitisation policies and programs within Europe and the participation of the Ministry in Minerva (Ministerial Network for valorising activities in digitisation), the General Secretary, Henry Ingberg has ordered a prospective study with a view to initiating a co-ordinated digitisation process in the Ministry, the first results of which should be expected by June 2003. Though the will to integrate oneself in a digitisation policy is also in keeping with the access for the general public to heritage, the integration capacity in programs at the European level (eEurope, ITS program, Culture 2000, Media, etc.), the preservation and the conservation of the heritage, the multiform dissemination of information and the valorisation of heritage and finally, with its contribution to the influence of the French Community, it is however

tempered by the current absence of budgetary means for the translation into reality of such a policy. The priority of a prospective study will involve inventorying the collections. On this basis, the technologies associated with the different types of collections will be proposed. Their costs and the necessary budgets will be determined. The study will also establish standards for digitization. Based on the available budgets and the priorities defined, an initial phase of digitisation could be a possibility. The priority measures of this prospective study will thus be inventorying and programming. On the basis of inventories and a state of the art, this involves finding a global common approach for digitisation (standards, technical and regulatory constraints, guidelines for establishing priorities and choices), and establishing collective and individual priorities. In case there is no inventory, the basic inventory work will be done. It will also involve guaranteeing the conservation of aging collections via preservation activities and/or their transfer to other types of media. One of the features of the policy of cultural institutions in the field of heritage digitisation is certainly the individualistic approach, the particular initiative, for a more or less long term and more or less advanced. Of paramount importance for the study is to identify good practices in digitisation in the French Community of Belgium and to give them wide diffusion at the European level. Participation in the NRG and in the Minerva project, guaranteed by the partnership of the French Community, offers the Ministry the opportunity and the possibility:

- to benefit from the work, experience, good practice, and plans for digitisation of the other countries of the European Union;

- to compile a register of the individual and isolated approaches within its institutions or departments;
- to learn from the benefits and necessity of a more co-ordinated approach.

The departments concerned by this study are the Directorate General for Culture, its Archives, Libraries and Museums, the Film Library and the General Department for Audiovisual and Multimedia.

The French Community's decree of 17 July, 2002, regarding the recognition and subsidizing of museums and similar institutions (Belgian Legal Gazette of 9 October, 2002)

This decree addresses both the recognition and financing of museums and similar institutions, and it sets up an advisory body called the Conseil supérieur des musées et des institutions muséales (supreme council for museums and similar institutions), which shall assist the Government in its decisions and actions. Three underlying objectives governed the drafting of this legislative text: the modernisation of the tool used by the museums – the introduction of new technologies, for example, the scientific quality and, finally, the democratic character of museum institutions. Emphasis is also placed on collection inventorying.

More precisely, article 8 of the decree provides for observation of the following museum criteria:

- possess a permanent, inventoried collection of cultural and scientific interest;
- present sufficient guarantees with regard to the study, communication, conservation, and management of the collection;

- possess an infrastructure that is adequate for all museum functions, including the protection of heritage using adequate equipment;
- possess qualified personnel to perform scientific, administrative, educative and technical functions, as well as active security;
- be accessible to the public according to terms predefined by the museum or institution;
- develop a dynamic approach of socially and culturally diverse societies;
- participate in networking or collective museum activities;
- collaborate with other institutions in cultural, educational, social, economic, and tourism fields.

The collection of art works of the Ministry of the French Community of Belgium and the digitisation of images

The French Community of Belgium Wallonia – Brussels admittedly possesses an artistic activity pertaining to a long tradition and an internationally acknowledged quality. This creative abundance fully fits into the European history of Art, whether during the past or today, by regularly contributing to it. Without going back to the Flemish masters of the 15th and 16th centuries, it should be noted that Belgian French-speaking artists have always been singled out within international artistic trends. We only have to think of the arts and crafts specific to architects and artists of the Art nouveau – (for instance: Horta, Hankar, the jeweller Wolfers). More recently, the surrealistic trend saw the emergence of René Magritte or Paul Delvaux, who both gave us another insight into the world and its perception. Their European success and influence as well as their numerous emulators all over the world testify to their



could only really be materialised and systematised within the framework of checking (verification of inventory) and restoring campaigns launched since 1999. In this process of digitisation of 4 x5' ektachromes, special care has been given to the reliability of colours for paintings, as well as the restitution of matters for sculptures. Image retouches are limited to these colour corrections, to the suppression of some defaults resulting from the ektachrome support as well as, in some cases, to the renewed creation of an environment or a background allowing an enhanced valorisation of the art work. The calibration between scanners, screens and printings must also be checked and constantly adjusted so as to ensure a result aimed at the most faithful restitution of the work. Reproductions are ranked in separate computer repertoires, whether identification photographs, restorations (before / after), photographs of works *in situ* or how these have been integrated in the scenography of an exhibition, for instance. This digitisation of images entails various advantages, among which quality control when these works are reproduced in catalogues of exhibitions or in scientific books. It also allows an enhanced speed of dissemination, as bought works can swiftly be advertised through Internet, while awaiting a further paper edition.

Terms of reference and National policy profile

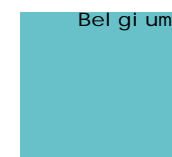
Various actions have been taken to support the diffusion and visibility of the Lund action plan and the NRG in the French Community. Written reports are regularly sent in the French Community to the Gouvernement (Minister-President in Charge of International Relations – H. Hasquin, Minister

“fantastic imaginary”, to its originality and at the same time, to its universality, – this so unusual imaginary we all see being created and created anew in the Wallonia and Brussels regions.

The French Community of Belgium regularly acquires contemporary art works, perpetuating in this way the policy advocated since 1860 by the Belgian State. It manages about 25.000 masterpieces, from modern art to most contemporary art, which is one of the most important and diversified public collections in Belgium. These works and masterpieces are mainly entrusted to specialised museums and contemporary art centres created since the 1970's, the most recent of which is the Museum for Contemporaneous Arts at Hornu (Mons). These works are also regularly lent out to help organise exhibitions – for major works – in great museums or in local cultural centres for less known artists.

The technique of photography is one of the most essential tools to be able to identify, show and valorise this heritage which keeps growing, about 200 new works each year.

A first systematic campaign of black-and-white photographs among all 25.000 pieces of the collection began during the eighties and the archiving of negatives was entrusted to the IRPA (Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique), a still federal institution. 1999 saw the birth of a new campaign of colour reproductions. At stake was not only the creation of identification documents as was the case in the past, but also the constitution of a genuine database with respect to the various aspects and the preservation state of works. So, sculptures and facilities are submitted to shooting from various angles and paintings are specifically shot when they are being restored or “re”-framed. Though the digitisation of black-and-white drawings had been initiated from the end of the Eighties onward, it



of Culture – R. Demotte, Minister of Audiovisual and the Arts – R. Miller); in the Administration (Film Library, Directorate General for Culture, General Department for Audiovisual and Multimedia, General Committee for International Relations, Department for International relations); and to the Permanent Representation of the French Community to the European Union.

In January 2002 (14/01/02) an information day on the European projects and programmes took place at the Ministry of the French Community. The Lund Principles, NRG, and the Brussels Quality Framework were presented there. The exhibit was organised for private archive centres and for the libraries of the French Community. In March 2002 a brochure entitled *Culture and the Knowledge Society* presenting the Belgian Culture Presidency led by the French Community was distributed to cultural operators in the French Community, in the framework of the Fête de l'Internet (Internet Festival). It presented the Lund Principles, the National Representatives Group, the Minerva Project, and the Brussels Quality Framework.

Its content was published online at <http://www.cfwb.be/culture-internet>. The Internet site “Brussels Quality Framework” (French-English) was launched in June 2002. There, the Lund Principles, NRG, and the Minerva Project are referred to (<http://www.cfwb.be/qualite-Bruxelles>). On 3 June, 2002, an information meeting at the Directorate General for Culture examined the status of this diversified material and presented the good practices diffused on the occasion of the second NRG meeting held in Alicante in May 2002.

A page of the French Community's Internet site will soon be put online to propose the start of a “French Community Policy Profile”. It will be completed within the next 6 months.

Moreover, considering the structure of the Belgian State, in order that all the ministerial departments concerned by NRG activities should be informed, various activities have been undertaken outside the French Community by the Representative of the French Community to the NRG.

Together with the German-Speaking Community, a basis for collaboration was established in April 2002 with the representative of that Community to the Cultural Affairs Council of the European Union, Edith Bong.

Since March 2002, various informal contacts have been established with the Scientific and Technical Information Service (STIS) of the Federal Science Policy Department. On the 4th of June 2002, the NRG representative of the French Community made a presentation of the progress of the Lund Action Plan (creation of the NRG, launching of the Minerva project and Quality Framework), in a meeting of the National Focal Point “European Archives, Libraries and Museums” (NFP/ALM) chaired by the director of the STIS.

On the 21st of November 2002, during the information day organized by the STIS (in name of the NFP/ALM) in the Royal Library, the representative of the French Community in the NRG made a presentation of the initiatives taken since the Lund meeting with a view to better co-ordinate the digitization policies of the scientific and cultural heritage in the EU (Lund Action Plan, NRG, Minerva). The target public were the archives, libraries and museums of the country as a whole.

3. GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

There doesn't exist any specific digitisation programme in the field of culture. The German-speaking Community approaches the matter by elaborating different projects to disseminate cultural contents.



- 1)Art and Culture:
- Register of cultural associations and artists;
 - Information desk;
 - Museum (Art collection of the German-Speaking Community);
 - Cultural Contact Point of the EU.

- 2)Monument and Landscape Protection:
- Register of listed monuments and landscapes;
 - Information desk;
 - Information about the Royal Commission of Monument and Sites;
 - European Heritage Days.

- 3)Archaeology
- Report on the excavations;
 - Scientific and historical analyses.

- 4)Media Center
- Register of libraries and media libraries;
 - Network of catalogs;
 - List of events and animations.

5)Digitisation of film archives.

4. FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

Introductory note: the federal scientific and cultural institutions

As a result of the State reform implemented in 1980, the general public competences in the sector of culture (including the memory institutions: libraries, archives and museums) have been transferred to the cultural Communities. Nevertheless several institutions have remained under the responsibility of the federal

authority so as to allow them to continue to preserve and develop as appropriate what is a priceless indivisible heritage. Their tasks lie at both national and international level.

Ten of the federal scientific and cultural institutions are “Federal Scientific Establishments (FSEs)” with a large autonomy, placed under the administrative control of the department of the Federal Science Policy, namely (in chronological order): the General State Archives (created in 1796); the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (1801); the Royal Observatory of Belgium (1826); the Royal Art and History Museums (1835); the Royal Library of Belgium (1837); the Belgian Royal Institute of Natural Sciences (1846); the Royal Museum of Central Africa (1897); the Royal Meteorological Institute (1913); the Royal Institute of Artistic Heritage (1946) and the Belgian Institute of Space Aeronomy (1964). To these ten institutions should be added the Research and Documentation Centre on War and Contemporary Society, which partly comes under the General State Archives whilst enjoying autonomy status. The Belgian Royal Film Archive is also funded by the Federal Science Policy budget. The Royal Museum of the Army and Military History comes under the federal Department of Defence.

Policy scenario for digitisation

Promotion and valorization of the scientific potential of the FSEs

During the last years, the Federal Science Policy department took various initiatives in order to promote and valorise the scientific potential of the FSEs. The emphasis was put on the support of new multiannual scientific projects (including digitization projects), the

strengthening of their human resources, the setting up of research networks with the academic world and the integration of the establishments in the national communication network for research (Belnet).

White Book for the modernization of the Federal Scientific Establishments (FSEs)

A major initiative was taken in May 2002 by the federal Minister of Scientific Research and the Government Commissioner responsible for Science Policy, namely the publication (with the Heads of the FSEs) of the White Book “Horizon 2005” that aims at giving a significant impulse to the modernization of the ten federal scientific establishments (FSEs), in synergy with the “Copernicus” reform of the federal administration. The establishments should be raised to the highest international level as regards both quality and social relevance of the research and scientific public service they carry out. And they should permanently secure that this high level of performance is maintained. In order to reach these objectives and to fill the gap accumulated with regard to the similar foreign institutions, significant extra-investments will be needed during ten years, in particular as regards infrastructure.

For more information see:

http://www.bel.spo.be/bel.spo/ostc/geninfo/publ/pub_ostc/esf/Witboek_fr.pdf.

The conservation and valorisation of the scientific, historical and artistic heritage held by the FSEs has been identified as a major issue at stake, in order to give the FSEs the capacity to keep in phase with the evolution of the society (new museology, use of new information technologies, in particular digitization policy, etc), to contribute to the image of the country and of its institutions and to improve the services to the

society, the political authorities and the citizens. Another major challenge is the role the FSEs have to play in the development of the information society and especially in the improvement of access to knowledge. Eight programmes of action have been identified, the first of which being called “Using the new information technologies in order to secure the management and the access to heritage”. A set of wide ranging measures in favour of the digitization of the scientific and cultural heritage is proposed including the digitization of collections, inventories, catalogs and data and the development of new – online and offline – electronic services.

A preparatory strategic study aimed at contributing to the setting up of the digitization action plan for the ten Federal Scientific Establishments (FSEs) and the Royal Film Archive (RFA) is currently being carried out by an external consultant and will be achieved by March 2003. The main tasks of the study are: (i) to make a comprehensive inventory of the collections, skills, resources and needs and to draw up a state-of-the-art report; (ii) to build a shared vision and a common strategy with the FSEs and the RFA for the ten years to come; and (iii) to make an estimation of the human, technical and financial resources needed. A global and collective approach to a large-scale digitization of the scientific and cultural heritage held by the federal establishments should be elaborated (e.g. on standards, technical and regulatory constraints, guidelines for priority settings, etc), taking into account the individual constraints and priorities and the specificities of each institution.

Terms of reference and National policy profile

It will be proposed that the federal contribution to the National policy profile and to the Questionnaire will be





co-ordinated by the Federal Science Policy department (more precisely, its Scientific and Technical Information Service – STIS). The STIS will gather information on the policies and activities of the FSEs. The ongoing study on the digitization of the FSEs and the RFA will be an important source of information and of examples of good practices. The STIS will contribute to ensure awareness of the NRG Terms of reference and of the Lund Principles in the federal institutions. A progress report on the Lund Action Plan will be circulated at the next meeting of the College of Heads of the FSEs (9th of December 2002).

Co-operation activities

Setting-up of an ad hoc Consultation group for the follow-up of the Lund process

On the 24th of September an information meeting on the Minerva project and on the activities of the National Representatives Group was held with the appointed representatives of the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities, and of the Federal Science Policy Department.

In order to guarantee a co-ordinated approach of Belgium towards the EU for the follow-up of the Lund Action Plan, it has been proposed to give a permanent character to these *ad hoc* consultation meetings for the duration of the Minerva project (i.e. until February 2005). Taking into account its role in the Minerva project, the French Community will be responsible for the co-ordination and the secretariat of these meetings. This mechanism will also allow the exchange of information on these matters between the Communities and the federal department of Science Policy.

Federal e-Government portal

This is a project initiated by the federal Prime Minister. An agreement was established between the federal, Community and Regional authorities with a view to guarantee a co-ordinated approach of all public Government portals (Federal State, Communities, Regions). Two work groups were created: one for the technical aspects and one for the content. The task of the “Content” work group is to agree on a common definition of the two first levels of navigation in the portals.

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Co-ordination of national networks

- Digicult Vlaanderen Co-ordination group: formed in September 2002. Composed of members from the Culture administration, representatives from the Flemish Community in the European groups (NRG and Minerva) and a few Flemish organisations such as CultuurNet Vlaanderen (formerly: Vlaams Centrum voor Cultuurcommunicatie) and Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen, which are developing a few important projects in the area of digitisation. The objectives of this co-ordination group are listed above. Between meetings, information is sent electronically with a request for feedback.
- The Media-innovation cell monitors and supports eFI@nders - the Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen (development and spread of know-how, co-ordination and policy recommendations, support of operational structure of eFI@nders, which consists of the Information Society Steering Group on the one hand and the Strategic Digital Forum on the other).



- Some examples of co-operation activities:
<http://www.tento.be>,
a portalsite for exhibitions and museums;
<http://www.erfgoodweekend.be>,
an initiative of different actors in the cultural heritage sector and supported by the Flemish Minister of Culture.

Relationships and co-ordination with other national initiatives in connection with eEurope, e-government, e-learning

E-government: with the e-government programme the Flemish government aims to create an integrated government counter, which ensures that all citizens, businesses, organisations, institutions and associations can communicate in confidence with an interactive government and that all authorities work together to offer everyone in Flanders, regardless of location, time and communication channel, an efficient level of government services. A number of members of the Digicult Vlaanderen co-ordination group are also monitoring the Flemish government’s progress with e-government in the policy areas of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media. For more information:
<http://www.vlaanderen.be/egovernment>.
The Culture database also has a place in this story. The Culture database project (of CultureNet Flanders) includes a network of databases, whereby it is assumed that time will also be made for partner databases: these are just as many initiatives by towns and villages, cities and provinces, sector centres, and also by private organisations. With all these partners, alignment is sought often in quite intensive partner routes. The Culture database project is also striving towards alignment with the e-government route of the Flemish

Community. Cultural information and services must be included in the e-government initiatives on the Internet. Alignment is also being actively sought with Flanders Tourism. In view of the overlapping of tourism and cultural information, (events, cultural organisations, etc.), and the many common partners, alignment of the culture database with the tourism and recreation database of Flanders speaks for itself. For more information: <http://www.culturenet.be>.

E-europe: The eFI@nders Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen aims to give a more concrete backdrop to the policy intentions expressed in the Flemish coalition agreement. To this end the Flemish government approved the eFI@nders Framework Note on 29 March 2002 in which the main lines, strategic options, and success enhancing activities of the Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen were established. The four lines of force are:

- High quality and accessible infrastructure;
- Investment in people and skills;
- Stimulation and strengthening of digital Flanders;
- Inclusive and democratic information society.

The practical details of this framework will be established in an annual eFI@nders plan of action. The Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen relates partly to the digitisation of scientific and cultural content. With its eFI@nders - Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen, the Flemish government hopes to tie in with the objectives and lines of force of the eEurope 2002 action plan. For more information: <http://www.eflanders.be>.

E-europe: In March 2002, the European portal site for Culture, (<http://europe.eu.int/comm/culture>), was



launched. In the first phase, the content is confined to general information over the context and mission of the portal site. Furthermore, there is a heading at which an overview is given with links to the national culture Websites of the member states. For Flanders the link is made to the Website of the Culture administration (<http://www.vlaanderen.be/cultuur>). Visitors who click through to the Culture Website from the European portal site can obtain a concise English description (by clicking the ‘English’ link) of the minister’s cultural policy and of Cultuurnet Vlaanderen. Gert Van Tittelboom, Webmaster for the Culture administration and member of the co-ordination study group is also one of the Webmasters who monitors the portal site at the European level. In this context he also monitors Minerva WP5 ‘Website Quality’. A request has been put forward to extend the Flanders site in the future by adding English. In the second phase it was opted to make the portal site a platform, upon which more detailed information can be found: more therefore than just a list of links.

E-learning: the department of education gives information via <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/ict> over the educational use of ICT in education. Here, links are made to studies, training and international networks. A text explaining how ICT fits in with education in 2002-2004 has recently been written, and this can also be consulted via the Website. Via Minerva too, information is exchanged on for example the ‘Campus Electronique’ e-learning project.

European and international co-operation

Some examples:

- both the NRG representative and the Webmaster for the Culture administration are in contact with the Netherlands;
- several Flemish intermediary organisations, such as support points have international contacts in their domains and / or participate in European projects (cf. the PULMAN project);
- the Nederlandse Taalunie (co-operation between Flanders and the Netherlands) also deals with aspects of ICT. More information: <http://www.taalunieversum.be>;
- CultuurNet Vlaanderen (CultureNet Flanders) and CultureNets Europe: one of the networks with which Flanders’ CultureNet maintains close contact, is CultureNets. This is made up of organisations abroad, which have developed projects, similar to Culture database. They want to set up the CultureNet Association (CNA) together. The CultureNets are commonly set up on the initiative of the government, and are mainly occupied with digital revelation of the cultural offer available and the public range. In the establishment of CNA, CultureNet Flanders wants to take up a key role. The aim of this network is to exchange experiences and knowledge about everything related to “culture&digital”. In particular, the Culture database project connects to the CultureNets operations. The network exists of CultureNet Denmark, CultureNet Sweden, CultureNet Norway, CultureNet Iceland, CultureNet Finland, CultureNet Croatia, CultureNet Schleswig-Holstein, CultureNet Greenland and Digitaal Erfgoed Nederland (Digital Heritage Netherlands).

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

Co-ordination of national networks

Creation of a task force for the NRG and Minerva within the Ministry.
Participation of the Representative of the French Community to the Committee for Cultural Affairs of the European Union

Collaboration with the agenda of the Presidency of the European Union constitutes an important factor in the backing of the development and progression of the NRG’s work and in the guarantee of synergy between the NRG’s work and the Presidencies of the EU. This synergy was strongly established in the French Community through discussion via the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) of the Council’s draft decision on the long-term presentation of digital memory during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. This synergy will be actively maintained with the programme of future Presidencies of the European Union (presence of the Representative of the French Community to the CAC and close collaboration with the permanent Representation of the French Community to the European Union supported and encouraged by the General Secretary).

Cycle of meetings on the topic of cultural tourism and the importance of museums with regard to tourism organized by the General Department for Cultural Patrimony and Plastic Arts of the Ministry of the French Community

In the intention of contributing to the development of Museums and, more particularly, of practicing a cultural policy that favours such institutions, the Ministry of the French Community is organising a Cycle of meetings

dedicated to cultural tourism, with emphasis placed on the role and importance of museums for tourism. By inviting Museum directors, but also the directors of tourist agencies to these meetings, the Cultural Patrimony Department wishes to promote privileged meetings between cultural and tourism operators. It is together that reflection will take place and that the issues addressed will be determined in consideration of the demands of leaders in these industries. Priority will be given to the public: a process of permanent collaboration will be established with the museum community, which will give this step a dynamic connotation. The “inaugural” day of the Cycle, organised by our Ministry on 21 November, 2002 was singled out by the addresses of the Minister of Culture, R. Demotte and the Secretary General of the French Community, Henry Ingberg, Unesco’s Protector of Patrimony, the Director of the European Institute of Cultural Agendas. Organizers have planned to add to the agenda of a Day of this Cycle of meetings, the European initiatives for co-ordination of policy relating to the digitisation of cultural and scientific patrimony in the European Union.

The Walloon Museums portal

Signed in December of 2001, the Convention linking the Walloon Region, the French Community of Belgium, and the ASBL Musées et Société en Wallonie, has the primary objective of involving Walloon museums in a policy for tourism and T.I.C. development, while lending visibility to the AICIM (computerised access to the collections of museum institutions concluded between the CFB and MSW in December 2000) programme. To this end, the Internet portal, which will soon be operational, will help the

promotion, both in Belgium and abroad, of the permanent and temporary activities of all Walloon museums, that is, some 350 institutions. The portal will be divided into two parts. The first, addressing the public at large, will offer not only information on Walloon museums, but also on cultural “packages”. In other words, a collection of cultural and tourism information will be available through each of the museums (lodging, dining, other natural and cultural sites of interest, etc.). The second part will only be accessible to museum professionals and will likely contain information relating to the collections, libraries, etc., but also resource lists (services, supplies, sources of financing, exchange programmes, etc.)

At the same time that the portal is launched, reception terminals will be installed in thirty-four museums, while two promotional terminals reserved for the Walloon Region and the French Community will subsequently be installed at strategic tourist sites to be selected. This project is entirely financed by the Walloon Region, and its implementation is entrusted to M.S.W. Each museum will thus have one page – enriched with various links – illustrated with three photographs. The illustrations come either from museums, or from the work of photographers hired for the project (the photographic campaign being closed).

The Portal was built in observance of the quality criteria of Brussels Quality Framework on the recommendation of the Ministry of Culture of the French Community.

Relationships and co-ordination with other national initiatives in connection with e-Europe, e-government, e-learning

The French Community collaborates with the federal e-Government project initiated by the Belgian Prime

Minister, within the framework of the co-operation agreement established between the federal, Community and Regional authorities. The close work between the official of the Ministry of the French Community, official representative of the Community in the e-Gouvernement concertation body and the representative of the French Community in the NRG, co-ordinator of the Minerva project for the Ministry, guarantees future co-ordination for developing the culture item.

The project consists of entirely re-thinking relations between the public authorities, citizens, and the businesses using the opportunities offered by modern technologies, the Internet, and new media forms. The aim is to provide users fast, efficient, and integrated services with minimal administrative formalities.

Via these portals, users will enter their requests only once (without worrying who will process it). Document required of a user by one administration and coming from a second administration will be transmitted directly from one administration to the other without user intervention.

The creation of this e-government called for an accord between the Federal, Community, and Regional authorities...

Two portals (one for citizens, the other for businesses) are presently being built. In the process, care is being taken to respect the user's logic and not that of the public authorities.

Two workgroups (with the members of Federal, Community, and Regional institutions) have been created: one for technical aspects and one for content. The “Content” workgroup's task is to define the two first levels of navigation in the two portals. The definition of this navigation structure for the Citizen portal was based on the “Citizen's Lifecycle”. The

first level of navigation lists the important and/or memorable episodes in life from birth to death (e.g., childhood, studies, health, married life...), i.e., 24 episodes. These episodes are then subdivided into multiple phases, making up the 2nd level of navigation.

To complete this task (nearly completed today), comparisons were made by the selected service provider with other e-government projects in France, Québec, Great Britain, and elsewhere.

European and international co-operation

The Europe and Culture portal

The “Europe and Culture” portal, launched on the occasion of the informal meeting of European Ministers of Culture in Salamanca, Spain, on 18 and 19 March, 2002, is a simple information tool in 5 languages (FR, EN, GE, IT, and SP) intended for all those interested in European Union activities in the field of culture.

The public address is:
<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture>.

The “Europe and Culture” portal aims to guide cultural operators, teachers and researchers, heads of public institutions, but also ordinary citizens interested in Culture and Europe through the various interventions of the EU in this area. The portal presents a collection of useful and simple information on cultural activities such as music, dance, or restoration of heritage, or on the different Community activities, such as cultural co-operation, regulations, cultural financing, and international relations.

With synergy in mind, Isabelle Dujacquier,

representative of the French Community to the NRG and co-ordinator of the Minerva project for the French Community, was designated as Community correspondent for the European cultural portal. At the first meeting of correspondents of the European culture portal on 26 June, 2002, the Minerva project and the work of the Quality Group were presented.

The “ Francophone “ Museum portal

The participation of the Ministry of the French Community in the “Francophone” (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada) museum network project, which constitutes the continuity of the three “Francophone” meetings “Museum Institutions and New Technologies”, should allow for the diffusion of future results of the Minerva project.

Research and diversity of museums

The University of Québec at Montréal (EQAM) and, in particular, the master's programme in Museology organised “Wealth and Diversity of Museums” on 13 April, 2002. There the representative of the Directorate for Culture, Museums Department presented the Brussels Quality Framework.

The objectives of this event were to present and analyze the relations between museums, to ensure the promotion of new works, and to promote the museology education programme of the EQAM and its partnership with the University of Avignon for a doctorate in museology.

The principal museologists and specialists of Québec museums (B. Schiele, R. Montpetit, M. Dubé, Y. Bergeron) and French museums (MM J. Davallon, D. Poulot) were invited to speak there.



Bibliocom 2002 – Rome, 17 October, 2002 “Quality in cultural Websites”

Presentation by Isabelle Dujacquier of the work of the Quality workgroup of the Minerva project, while the Lund framework and the NRG were presented by Rosella Caffo, Minerva project co-ordinator.

3. FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

Co-ordination of national networks

There is no official and permanent body for consultation nor a general co-operation agreement between the Communities (and the federal authority) in the field of culture (and especially for the memory institutions). *Ad hoc* solutions are thus defined when needed in order to facilitate co-ordination e.g. within the context of Belgian participation in international activities and programmes.

At federal level, the scientific, administrative and financial co-ordination of the ten Federal scientific establishments is carried out by the College of Heads of FSEs set up in 1996 under the chairmanship of the Head of the Federal Science Policy department.

An Accompanying Committee has been set up to follow-up the study on the digitization of the FSEs and the RFA. It comprises representatives of each of the institutions and of the Federal Science Policy department. Four thematic working groups have been created (Documents; Artistic Objects; Scientific Objects; Digital Management). It appears already that a new dynamics of collaboration between the various federal institutions is being gradually initiated and that common approaches are searched for.

The Belnet workgroup “Cultural Heritage” (WGPAT) was created in 1998. It is a forum for discussion and information exchange on the technical aspects of databases in the field of cultural heritage. The aims of the project were: (i) to build a discussion forum concerning cultural heritage (and specially digital images); (ii) to list and evaluate standards; (iii) to publish a yearbook with persons and institutions who are specialists in the field of cultural heritage; and (iv) to make public reference databases available.

Relationships and co-ordination with other national initiatives in connection with eEurope, e-government, e-learning

The White Book for the modernization of the FSEs and the digitization study take full account of the need to develop the potential contribution of the FSEs in the federal e-government initiative (especially the federal e-Gov Portal).

European and international co-operation

The Federal Science Policy department has been co-ordinating since 1990 the activities of the Belgian National Focal Point (NFP) which was created in order to follow-up the Telematics Applications for Libraries activities of the FP3 and FP4 for RTD of the EU. It was decided in January 1999 to enlarge the NFP to representatives of the archives and museums in order to be able to reflect in an appropriate manner the new place for these memory institutions in FP5 (IST programme). The NFP/European Archives, Libraries and Museums (NFP/ALM) comprises professionals from the three sectors as well as civil servants from the appropriate administrations nominated by each Cultural Community and the Federal Authority. It was appointed

for the duration of FP5. The chairmanship and the secretariat of the NFP/ALM were run by the STIS (Scientific and Technical Information Service). The STIS is the Belgian national node of the pan-European network CULTIVATE for the Digital Cultural Heritage community. The network is an accompanying measure of the IST programme (FP5). Contacts were established with the new Candidate Countries within the framework of the network CULTIVATE-CEE. The STIS is also one of the Belgian National Contact Points of the programme eContent (2002-2005), included in the eEurope action plan.

Benchmarking

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

The Flemish representative in the Benchmarking Group has distributed the benchmarking model to a few museums in Flanders, but not received any useful information. It seems the model was not always easy to fill in for these institutions, which are often still in the early stages of digitisation. Also considering the fact that museums are often asked to fill out questionnaires, a government incentive would be of interest when questionnaires have to be filled in. It would be interesting if a sort of theme were to grow from the benchmarking model for the process of digitisation, in other words, a sort of checklist to which institutions could refer.

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

With a view to the seminary on heritage preservation, organised under the aegis of the

Belgium Presidency, Community Minister Demotte, in charge of Culture, has ordered an inquiry to take stock of the practices of competent instances and institutions in the field of digitisation and of the processing on Internet of the cultural and scientific heritage in the French Community of Belgium. Through this enquiry light has been shed on the disparity among institutions, some being already highly evolved in digitisation and reflection, others even not possessing computers. On the occasion of the Internet Feast in March 2001, the General Direction for Culture of the French Community of Belgium has edited a booklet bringing back to mind the initiatives taken by the Belgian Presidency as far as new technologies and Knowledge Society are concerned. It was also an opportunity to take stock of our results and to show our projects as well as to begin a book summing up the Internet sites of cultural operators. The first initiatives in the field of e-administration of the French Community of Belgium (<http://www.cfwb.be/portail/gui chet>) and the sector initiatives are presented. This resolutely practical booklet enumerates the electronic addresses of institutions that, in the same way, have answered a questionnaire inspired by the work of the Benchmarking group (<http://www.cfwb.be/cul ture-i nternet>). The current initiatives and the coming initiatives are and will be conceived taking into account recommendations coming from the work of the Minerva project “Benchmarking” Workpackage.

3. FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

A study was carried out by the Royal Institute of Artistic Heritage a few years ago on the information tools



(inventories, software, Websites) used in the field of cultural heritage (especially art history). As a result, a Website “Belgian Art Links and Tools” was set up (see: <http://bal.at.kikirpa.be/web/index-fr.html>). The above mentioned study on the digitization of the FSEs and the RFA will undoubtedly provide new data on the specific competences and skills existing in the federal scientific establishments as regards digitization and on the experience already gained.

Inventories and resource discovery

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Available inventories

- In preparation for the eFI@nders - Digitaal Actieplan Vlaanderen a summary of ongoing government initiatives and projects in the area of the information society has been drawn up. For more information: <http://www.eFIanders.be>.
- In the Culture administration, a summary has been compiled of the digitisation projects subsidised in the year 2002.
- In the framework of the Culture database project of CultureNet Flanders, in the preparatory phase, an extended qualitative investigation (inventory) was conducted into existing databases and initiatives in Flanders. This investigation provided a good picture of existing digitisation across the culture sector in Flanders. For this purpose a methodology was developed. In the future a similar investigation will also be carried out, with the intention of gaining a complete quantitative image of the situation in Flanders, and this at regular intervals.

Metadata and interoperability
for resource inventories

As far as the ministry is aware there have been no co-ordination activities with the Minerva-study group in this area. Nevertheless, within the different ongoing projects such as VLACC II / Digitale Bibliotheek Vlaanderen, these items are being further developed (cf. *infra* – competence centres).

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

Available inventories

For the General Direction of Culture, only Heritage and Plastic Arts possess an exhaustive inventory of their collections, updated but not integrated and not suitable for interoperability. The first actions that will be taken within the framework of the digitisation plan will, first, make an inventory of the collections on the basis of a questionnaire. When there is no inventory, in whatever way, of some funds or collections, the basic inventory work will be performed, taking into account the significance of the involved heritage. Nevertheless, we can already mention various initiatives aimed at co-ordinating institutions.

AICIM (Accès informatisé aux collections des institutions muséales), launched in 1997 by the General Department for Cultural Heritage and Plastic Arts and currently managed in co-operation with the limited company Musées et Société en Wallonie, has the following aims: facilitate the information and the management of collections through the use of common software and establish data exchange among museums.

This project is directed at public museums subsidised by the French Community of Belgium, i.e. more than 80 institutions among the 450 existing in the French Community of Belgium. In its first phase, the team of the project has made an inventory of the existing material to complete it. Five groups of specific interest have been constituted (archaeology, art and history, ethnology and natural sciences, technical sciences and industries) to draw up a minimal common inventory file according to the type of collection using the international standards of ICOM – CIDOC and determining the adequate thesauri. Currently, the database common to 56 institutions holds 11.000 files. As regards the inventory of audiovisual heritage of the General Department for Audiovisual and Multimedia (Service général de l’Audiovisuel et des Multimédias - SGAM):

- the SGAM put in place an Internet database called CINEKIOSQUE, containing cinema productions aided by the *Centre du Cinéma et de l’audiovisuel* since 1995. This database allows visitors to search alphabetically by the following categories: documentaries, short films, long films, films for television, directors. It is made up of a collection of descriptive reference cards in html format for each production and each director. Each card includes textual information (summary, director, etc.) and a photograph, whenever possible. Each film card is connected by link to the card for the film director.
- The SGAM is currently working on a new, more powerful version of CINEKIOSQUE. The new application is developed under MICROSOFT ACCESS and is used to generate cards for paper catalogue and for consultation via Internet instead of the current CINEKIOSQUE version. The database is said to contain all films produced in the French Community

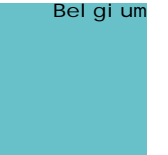
since 1990 for long films and since 1987 for short films, regardless of whether or not they were aided by the Centre du Cinéma et de l’Audiovisuel. The information available for each film will be textual information (summary, director, producers, co-producers, medium, duration, etc.), photographs (TIFF for catalogues, JPEG for Internet viewing), and Internet links whenever pertinent. No video clip attachments are planned.

At present, the database contains some 2800 entries (not all of which are complete).

Metadata and interoperability
for resource inventories

The field of audio-visual archives is usually characterised by proprietary solutions, such as HUMMINGBIRD (for the archive bank available on-line at <http://www.paxos.com>, or for the archive project PORTAL currently developed through local televisions of the French Community of Belgium) or CONVERRA (for archiving CANAL + Belgium). However, the existence of a project based on open standards, and supported by the CIRTEF (Communauté Internationale des Radios Télévisions d’Expression Francophone) and developed by a Belgian consortium, should be noted. It is the AIME project (Archivage Intelligent Multimedia Economique), inspired from the concept “collection-based persistent data archives” developed by the San Diego Supercomputer Centre. The management of metadata is based on XML and MPEG7, and the project is currently developed following the DJAKARTA freeware series. A short description of the project is available at the address





<http://www.titan.be/fr/hanovre.htm>.

In the field of tattoos and of the management of rights of intellectual property, note should be taken of the solutions developed by the OCTALIS firm (a spin-off of UCL communication laboratories). OCTALIS has, among others, developed a system of rights in the field of digital films. OCTALIS furthermore advocates the ORDL (Open Digital Rights Language) initiative, the aim of which is to develop an open standard for the management of digital rights. Further information can be obtained at <http://www.octalis.com>.

3. FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

Available inventories

Basic information and links to the Websites of the federal institutions can be found on the following Websites:

http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ostc/institut/index_uk.stm (Federal Science Policy department) and

<http://www.stis.fgov.be/cultivate> under "Archives-Libraries-Museums" (Website of the STIS). Specific pages dedicated to the National policy profile will be set up.

One of the objectives of the ongoing strategic study on the digitization of the ten Federal Scientific Establishments (FSEs) and the Royal Film Archive (RFA) is to produce an inventory of their existing resources, collections, databanks and information systems. A detailed inventory of their achievements and existing experience will be done. The results of the study should be made available by March 2003.

Good practice and skills

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Good practice exemplars and guidelines

Various recently formed organisations are in the process of starting and developing a number of large projects on digitisation and digital dissemination. The listing of good practices in Flanders has not been systematically compiled, but undoubtedly will be a major next step in developing digitisation policy.

Competence centres

The Flemish government has opted to use support points in its development of a cultural policy. A support point acts as a catalyst between policymakers and people in the field, between universities and the public, between information and education, between government and practice, between society and cultural practice. The support point has three key tasks:

- practical support;
- practical development;
- communication.

Competence and specialisation in the area of digitisation is growing in a few of these and other institutions. For example:

- CultuurNet Vlaanderen: As an expertise junction, CultureNet Flanders wishes to collect, develop and re-distribute and share existing knowledge and experience around cultural communication, and thereby contribute to improved practice and professionalism in the field of cultural communication.

A knowledge Web supplies tailor-made, relevant and practice-oriented information, such as white papers and announcements of relevant events. The development of the culture database project will also generate crucial knowledge on digitisation.

- Vlaams Centrum voor Openbare Bibliotheken (Flemish Centre for Public Libraries): develops specific competence in the application of standards for data description = (meta) data description standards. And later on for searches: search and retrieval standards; integration of services in a network context: service provisioning in a network (<http://www.vcob.be>).
- Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen: The Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen vzw, the support point for cultural heritage, has been set up on 1 January 2002 and has been further developed in the course of 2002 (<http://www.culturelebiografie.be>). Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen vzw supports and co-ordinates the operation of the cultural units implementing the covenants. In addition, it provides advice to other organisations and initiatives aiming to develop a comprehensive approach towards cultural heritage. Situated between the people in the field and the policymakers the Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen vzw plays, like the other support points, a detecting and informative role towards both groups. At the same time it fulfils, within its domain, a co-ordinating task between various other support points, such as the Vlaams Centrum voor Volkscultuur (<http://www.vcv.be>).

Main digitisation training initiatives for cultural heritage institutions

The more these organisations are able to develop their operations, the more we will see educational initiatives

in the area of digitisation. In the future the Digicult Vlaanderen co-ordination group can take on a stimulating role in the creation of a knowledge platform relating to the digitisation of scientific and cultural content. Examples include:

- “Study of the educational possibilities offered by the museum in the digital youth culture” (2001): The Flemish community has given this study assignment to the Education Research Group at the University of Gent, and it is supervised by professor Soetaert. The digital report – a work in progress – commissioned by the ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Visual Arts and Museums, can be found at: <http://memling.rug.ac.be/museum>.
- “Information on Flemish collection on the Internet; need for a phased approach” (2000): The Flemish community has given this study assignment to the firm, Kate Thomas & Klein, Corporate Communications Consultants, Brussels.
- Adlib (since 1997): The museum application (Adlib standard) is a program used to record a museum's collection in an effective and reliable manner. The Flemish Community organises courses on how to operate the program.

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

The projects enumerated hereafter allow us to identify some competence centres and practices used in the field of culture.

In the field of archives, an experiment of digitisation is currently carried out at MUNDANEUM (<http://www.mundaneum.be>), centre for private archives of the French Community of Belgium. Created at the end of the 19th century on the initiative of two

lawyers, Paul Otlet and Henri Lafontaine, the Mundaneum aimed at bringing together within one place all the knowledge in the world. Documentation centre with a universal vocation, its objective was to become a meeting place for all men of good will and from all disciplines with a pacifist conviction. It possesses countless documentary collections : Musée international de la presse, Répertoire Iconographique Universel (posters, post cards, glass plates, photographs, Universal Documentation Register, archives of the Amis du Palais mondial. The will of the institution is to diffuse information internationally. That's why iconographical documents and the documents of the Musée de la Presse are being listed, digitised and made available to the public on computer.

Even if costs are high and results sometimes deceptive (thousands images, and the memory allowed for each one is very small, so of lesser quality), the moral obligation of paying a tribute to the will of the creators to put at the disposal of the whole world the wealth of collections compels us to go ahead rather than opting for solutions that are less expensive and more reduced as far as diffusion is concerned, such as microfilming.

However, to save in all urgency the press of the 19th and 20th centuries, it seems indispensable to transit through microfilming which allows a consultation during more than 500 years, the costs of which are reduced and the technology of which is not evolving, while waiting for the digitisation of the originals or microfilms.

This is the position adopted by the CarCob (Centre des Archives communistes en Belgique) that is digitising its collection of the organ of the Belgian Communist Party, Le Drapeau Rouge. This work is done in close

co-operation with the Royal Library, on the one hand, to complete the incomplete collection of both institutions, and on the other hand, for the microfilming performed on the equipment of the Royal Library. This project is a pilot experiment and should be repeated with other institutions that possess collections of 19th and 20th century newspapers written in French. For this very fragile heritage microfilming provides good value for money for safeguarding in all urgency, waiting serenely for the digitisation with a view to preservation and consultation. Finally, both institutions will have, each, a copy of the almost complete collection of Le Drapeau Rouge.

The Centre international de Codicologie, the head office of which is at the Royal Library of Belgium, works, in partnership with the French Community of Belgium, at the creation of an Internet site (<http://www.scriptorium.be>) where will be presented the magazine Scriptorium, the Bulletin Codicologique and the bibliographical documentation with respect to mediaeval manuscripts registered in the magazines.

The project is ambitious, concretised with the scientific rigor of researchers benefiting from an experience of numerous years. Every researcher, wherever in the world, will accede to bibliographical references, in the places of preservation and, in a second stage of the project, to reviews made the collaborators to these magazines that respectively exist since 1946 et 1959.

In the same vein, in the French Community of Belgium, the Maison du Spectacle – La Bellone (<http://www.dataflet.com/bellone>) has begun digitising its documentary resources and its on-line connection. Its platform is directed at the same time to performing professionals (databank with *curricula vitae*

European added value and content framework

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Quality and accessibility for Web sites

The aim of this working group is to draw up a “Quality framework” with criteria for the realisation of quality Websites on culture. Belgium and Spain are the leaders in this group. The Culture administration has delegated its Webmaster to participate actively in this package. Via the Digicult Vlaanderen Co-ordination group, he keeps the main players in Flanders up to date on these developments and consults closely with the NRG representative of the French-speaking Community. It appeared at the last meeting, held on 16 October 2002, that most countries have guidelines for government sites, involving a number of quality criteria. This is also the case in Flanders. Proposals have been made to pay greater attention to the aspect of ‘accessibility’ to cultural Websites, particularly in the context of the ‘European year for disabled people’ in 2003.

The proposed co-operative links between the Benchmarking group and the Websites Quality group can only serve to enhance the incorporation of models and recommendations.

Long-term sustainability

We have some projects that are specifically working on this subject (for example: the conservation of videomaterial), but we perceive the need to work further in this area in the future. (See also research projects).

of actors, show announcements, rights, etc.) as well as at the wide audience with a subscription possibility to a cultural agenda and the access to the archives of the centre.

As far as the library sector is concerned, several initiatives have been taken in the French Community of Belgium. For instance, the site of the Ministry of the French Community of Belgium shelters in its feature “public reading” an interactive site (<http://www.cfwb.be/annuairebiblio>) managed by librarians and proposing a book of sites according to an assessment grid devised by librarians for their audience. Beside this presentation of the institution, it comments on the content, the identification, the navigation, the presentation, the referencing and the configuration with notes from one to three stars.

On the other hand, the Service de la Lecture publique (<http://www.cfwb.be/lecpub>) and the Centre de lecture publique de la Communauté française (<http://www.cfwb.be/clpcf>) want to create a “site of the sites” of libraries of the French Community of Belgium. Functioning as major linking element, there are more than 200 libraries having access to Internet (ISDN or ADSL lines).

This site will present three access levels : one for Webmasters, one for librarians and one for users of libraries and the wide public. Will be taken up on these sites : the announcement of an agenda with subscription possibilities, one (or two) database(s) regarding each library and bibliobus, an intern database (administrative everyday management and maintenance of a descriptive file compendium with respect to libraries and other institutions) with interoperability at the level of the actualisation of the data.

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

Quality and accessibility for Web sites

The Ministry of the French Community of Belgium, founding partner of the Minerva project (Ministerial Network for valorising activities in digitisation) has been entrusted with the co-ordination (80%) of the working group “Identification of user needs, content and quality framework for common access points”, in partnership with the National Library of Spain (20%). The quality criteria for Websites originate in the principles adopted at Lund on 4 April 2001 and appear in the conclusions of two expert meetings organised during the Belgian Presidency of Culture (“The digitisation of cultural heritage on the Web”, Brussels 17 July 2001 and “Culture and Internet”, Mons 22 September 2001).

The Brussels quality framework has been included in the “Culture and Knowledge Society” resolution adopted at the Council of European Culture Ministers of 5 November 2001. A working document has been devoted to the Brussels quality framework and presented during the first meeting of National Representatives Groups held in Brussels on 11 December 2001 under the aegis of the Belgian Presidency of Culture.

The working strategy of the Group is to feed on experience, good practices and quality criteria existing at the national level in the various countries of the European Union.

Though various actions were initiated to disseminate quality criteria, as well inside as outside, the short-term aim is to constitute a quality group in the French Community with representatives of the museum world, libraries and archiving places.

Long-term sustainability

In the field of preservation and maintenance, we have already spoken of the AIME project resting on the “collection-based persistent digital archives” approach. This approach has received all the attention of the AIME consortium as it appears to be one of the most promising approaches if we keep in mind long-term preservation. Very schematically, we can say that this approach proposes an architecture to manage the migration of data, and an informational model to manage the migration of the structure of the context allowing data interpretation. For more details on this approach, you can consult the San Diego Supercomputer Centre Website at <http://www.sdsc.edu/NARA> or even the two articles published on the subject in the on-line magazine D-Lib at <http://www.dlib.org> (March and April 2000 issues).

Research activities on digitisation

1. FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Examples include:

- Re-Creatief Vlaanderen: <http://www.re-creatieflaanderen.be>. “Management of cultural institutions, cultural experience and cultural participation in an information society”: this area of study focuses on the question of how ICTs take advantage of cultural experience as such, and whether and how ICTs can help increase cultural competence and lower participation thresholds. An information society will shape the cultural field, i.e. the artists, cultural institutions and organisations, and the public who (may or may not) participate in the culture, through the import and more



- widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT). In the broad cultural field the emphasis comes to lie on specific cultural institutions (or sub-fields) such as museums, public broadcasters and cultural centres. In this context see also:
- <http://www.vub.ac.be/SCOM/smit/smit.html>.
- Institute for Encouraging Stimulating Innovation through Science and Technology in Flanders: <http://www.iwt.be>: including Technical Feasibility Study. Products and Services for the Arts and Antiques Market, Kempies bvba.
 - DAVID (Digital Archiving in Flemish Institutions and Administrations) is a research project about digital durability in a governmental environment. It is a project of the Foundation for Scientific Research within the scope of the Max Wildiers Foundation and is a co-operation between the Antwerp City Archives and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Law and Informatics of the K.U.Leuven. For more information see: <http://www.antwerpen.be/david/eng/index.htm>.

2. FRENCH COMMUNITY

Should be singled out the activities of the UCL telecommunication laboratory in the field of image processing and coding, and of multimedia network securing (see the site: <http://www.tel.e.ucl.ac.be>).

3. FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

Ongoing initiatives as regards the digitization of the FSEs

Within the limits of the available means, the FSEs have undertaken a series of actions during the last years in order to implement various digitization projects

(including the digitization of collections, inventories, catalogs and data and the development of new – online and offline – electronic services).

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 pluriannual budget (2001-2008) of EUR 15.2 million.

The programme rests upon an approach that is experimental (funding of test bed projects), targets four specific sectors (i.e. the federal administration, the federal scientific establishments, the non-market sector, and the Belnet users community), is bottom-up (i.e. based on the individual and institutional users' needs and capacities for initiative) and does not give overriding priority to technological innovation. Special attention is given to applications that meet the programme's objectives regarding multilingualism, enhanced mastery of content in line with the various types of use, and consideration of the entire implementation chain (back-office reorganisation, regulatory context, and long-term manageability of the systems).

For the FSEs, the programme gives the preference to projects that use a co-operative approach to tackle the digitization of these highly specialised establishments'

collections and information holdings with the purpose of ensuring their conservation and facilitating their use. 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. The first call for proposals has led to the selection of 10 projects for a total budget of EUR 6.9 million. Most of the projects are implemented in two phases of two years. The implementation of the second phase is conditioned by the result of an external evaluation that takes place in the end of the first phase. Projects involving the FSEs are: UniCat, towards a Belgian virtual union catalogue; Digital access to aerial and astronomical photographic archives; DISSCO, document management integrated system for scientific organisations; Telematic network for teaching art history in universities.

For more information, see:

http://www.bel.spo.be/bel.spo/ostc/act_sci_e_n/fedra/prog.asp?l=u.

