

Executive Summary

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| diversity and richness of Europe's cultural resources | Europe's cultural institutions are widely involved in digitisation work. However as highlighted in the foreword by the Danish Minister of Culture, this activity is highly fragmented, involves a duplication of effort and investments, provides only limited access to resources and failed to make full use of available technology. |
| need to coordinate digitisation activities within eEurope | The eEurope 2002 Action Plan called on Member States and the Commission to create a co-ordination mechanism for digitisation policies and programmes across the Union. |
| the final goal is a European framework for the exchange of experience and good practice... | The objective overall is to establish a European framework for the exchange of experience and good practice, for optimising investments, for developing new services and skills, for evaluating and adopting promising new technologies whilst safeguarding cultural diversity and increasing the competitiveness of the cultural sector and the content industries. |
| Lund meeting and the National Representatives Group | At a meeting in Lund in April 2001, the Member States and the European Commission adopted a fundamental set of principles and a concrete Action Plan for implementation. In addition, a National Representative Group (NRG) was created to promote the Lund Principles and monitor the Action Plan. |
| strong support by the different Presidencies of the Union | This initiative has been strongly supported by the different Presidencies of the Union, and the National Representatives have been active in influencing national, regional and sectoral practices. |
| The MINERVA network | A network called MINERVA, co-funded by the European Commission, has been set up to carry forward the practical tasks outlined in the Action Plan. |
| Lund Principles as a reference point for digitisation policies | In accordance with the Lund Principles, the Member States now see digitisation as a component in wider information society activities, and the principles have become a reference point for common strategies and new policies for digitisation. |
| national coordination initiatives by the Member States | Building on the Lund Principles and the Action Plan, most of the countries have now established coordination networks. Contact points and technical workgroups have been created, and new pilot projects have been launched. |
| sharing experience on digitisation... | Sharing experience on digitisation policies and programmes has paved the way both for cooperation and for the development of good practice at national and European level. |
| a recognised need both technical and organisational guidelines | It is recognised that cultural institutions need both technical and organisational guidelines, as well as specific sets of practical recommendations if they are to meet the challenges inherent in large-scale digitisation activities. |
| focus on investments | There is increasing recognition that the introduction of new technologies into the world of culture must be seen as an investment, and not just a cost. And such an investment must be both productive and sustainable over time. |
| benchmarking as a tool for exchanging experience and learning from good practice | Member States have increasingly seen benchmarking of digitisation projects, programmes and policies as a tool for exchanging experience and learning from good practice, as a way to measure progress, as well as a useful approach for evaluating candidate projects for funding. |

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| ... new challenges ... | New challenges are emerging and the Lund Principles, the NRG and the national coordination networks provide a solid framework for the future. |
| the European platform and the interoperability challenges | Increasingly large collections of digital resources are being created. The challenge now is to build a comprehensive and interoperable European infrastructure which provides quality of access and new services for the citizen. Even if much work has already been done on metadata and standards, among the next big challenges are technical and organisational interoperability, and multilinguality. |
| quality and accessibility of Web sites for cultural institutions | A framework is needed to describe the quality and the accessibility of the cultural Web sites. The Brussels Quality Framework, developed by the NRG and Minerva, must build consensus on the issue and reinforce the sense of trust the users have in accessing cultural resources on the networks. |
| reduce costs of the 'digitisation chain' and implement economic sustainability | Creating, maintaining and providing access to digital cultural collections is still far too complicated, unpredictable and expensive. A major effort is needed to both substantially reduce the "total cost of ownership" of collections and to develop new business models for generating increased revenues. |
| to preserve digital memory is a key challenge both technical and organisational | The ability to preserve over a long period of time the digital resources created by cultural institutions is a major policy and technology challenge. Solutions are affected by and will affect on selection criteria, work-flow, management practices, business models and policy frameworks. In addition, the preservation of digital memory must be recognised as one of the most urgent, serious and challenging issues for future technology research. |
| the Council Resolution on preservation and its follow-up | The Council of the Union has produced in June 2002 a Resolution on preservation of digital memory and following up on this will involve Member States and the European Commission working together. |
| significant steps towards have been obtained... | Significant steps towards an effective coordination amongst Member States have been obtained thanks to the joint activity of the National Representatives and the European Commission. The Lund Action Plan sets out the priorities and the actions to be undertaken by the various actors. This progress report summaries the substantial efforts made in the Member States over the past 18 months highlighting the main results and impact of the initiative in establishing coordination which provides framework and on-going consensus building at European, national, regional and sectoral levels. |
| future perspectives | We now look forward to progress on enhanced Web access to national resources providing a sound basis for collaborative efforts leading to common technical solutions and the resulting costs benefits. It is the intention of the National Representatives and the European Commission to issue a further progress report early in 2004. |