

CO-ORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR DIGITISATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

8TH OFFICIAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES GROUP (NRG)

LUXEMBOURG, 20TH JUNE 2005

Abbey of Neumünster Cultural Meeting Centre

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SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The 8th meeting of the NRG was held on 20 June 2005 in Luxembourg under the chairmanship of the Luxembourg Presidency of the European Union 2005. In addition, a conference on “Future coordination of digitisation” was held on 21-22 June. Both events were hosted by the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research with the support of the Minerva IST project and the European Commission.

The NRG consists of a group of national delegates (civil servants and managers of culture ministries, other ministries, IT managers of major national institutions and programmes), who were nominated by their permanent representatives for the EU. The NRG meets on a bi-annual basis, chaired by the current Council Presidency. MINERVA project acts as operative secretary for the NRG framework, the network is partially funded by the IST programme of the European Commission, and partially co-supported by the Member States. Some expert workgroups are activated in order to work on specific issues related to the implementation of the Lund Principles.

The end of 2005 is set to be the end of the current Action Plan for coordination of digitisation in Europe that was drawn up under Swedish EU Presidency in 2001, and of the funding for the Minerva project.

The **specific objectives** of the meeting were to:

- present the **Dynamic Action Plan** (hereafter DAP) elaborated by the troika of NL, L, UK EU-Presidencies, as the successor of the Lund Action Plan. As one of the Council’s political priorities (Work plan 2005-2006) to be achieved and implemented during 2005, an agreement by the national representatives is expected about the strategic objectives of the new action plan;
- discuss the future mutual relations between the NRG and the Commission in the implementation of the European Digital Library, outlined in i2010;
- consider the draft Call for Proposals of the eContentplus Programme being launched by the Commission;

- underline the added value that coordination within Minerva working groups brought to the project on European level;
- redefine the **role and responsibilities for NRG**: identify a procedure to drive the nomination or reconfirmation of NRG members and ensure commitment and endorsement by Member States;
- confirm that the Lund principles still hold through;
- draw up the timetable for the finalisation of the dynamic action plan and for the nomination of new or the reconfirmation of the actual NRG members
- introduce the **United Kingdom Presidency** planning for the developments of the coordination initiative.

CONCLUSIONS - KEY STATEMENTS

1. The NRG is implementing the **Lund Principles** and has developed concrete results produced mainly by the MINERVA workgroups. In addition, the NRG is preparing a complete **new strategy** as a new action plan and mandate for the NRG by Member States. As a result of the efforts of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and United Kingdom EU Presidencies, following the work of the Greek, Italian and Irish Presidencies, the coordination initiative has increased its visibility and potential impact on the user community.
2. The Council of Ministers for Culture adopted in November 2004 a Rolling Agenda 2005 2006 in preparation of a **Work Plan for Culture 2006-2010** with 5 priorities: one of these is the future coordination of digitisation . NRG has been asked to prepare a new Action Plan. The troika of the European Union Presidencies (NL-LUX-UK) supported by the NRG Task Force, has prepared a draft for the successor of the Lund Action Plan to commence in January 2006.
3. A draft **Dynamic Action Plan** (DAP) for future coordination actions from 2006 was presented to the NRG meeting in Luxembourg. The Lund Principles are still valid, but many obstacles have been identified during the implementation of the Lund Action Plan: these obstacles have been the starting points for the definition of the DAP. The Luxembourg Presidency has set up a collaborative platform with some of the most relevant current projects to discuss the joint implementation of the DAP.
4. A proposal for nomination (or reconfirmation of formal nomination) and definition of **new role and responsibilities of the NRG** members with new Terms of Reference was proposed at the NRG meeting in Luxembourg.
5. The Dynamic Action Plan together with the redefined NRG structure will be proposed to the **Council by November 2005, to reinforce the mandate of NRG in its new context and to kick off the DAP.**
6. The NRG support the principle of the **European Digital Library**, as enabling access to the cultural and scientific heritage of Europe, including a wide range of media types such as images, literary works, manuscripts and moving images.
7. The NRG noted the eContentplus programme, and noted how the objectives of the programme could be related to a number of priorities identified by the NRG in the Dynamic Action Plan.
8. **The successful MINERVA** project will shortly come to an end but its 'products' will pave the way for continuation of the initiative and enable new challenges to be faced. **Long-term sustainability** for the results of the project will be enabled through several different routes: Member States support for their national representatives will continue; other national or EC-funded projects will be invited to support the DAP; and it is likely that a new secretariat initiative will be able to carry on the coordination of the expert workgroups and the preparation of the NRG meetings.

9. **The 3rd NRG Report** is ready for distribution. It is planned that the **4th NRG report** will be drafted in December 2005, under UK Presidency.

10. The **United Kingdom EU Presidency** will continue actions regarding the NRG framework. It will support the development and will launch the Dynamic Action Plan. A particular focus will be on access and users (eLearning and eInclusion), building on current practical initiatives and considering how the European Digital Library can be constructed, a key priority in i2010.

PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION AS OF JUNE 2005

- **Dynamic Action Plan and renovation of the NRG**

The Luxembourg Presidency has carried on the process, started by The Netherlands, to revise the Lund Principles and the Lund Action Plan, as well as the current NRG organisation of the co-ordination initiative. The NRG Task Force, during a workshop held under the chairmanship of Luxembourg on 3 February at Bourglinster Castle focussed on producing a proposal for the DAP, as the successor of the Lund Action Plan. This has been discussed and the broad approach validated at the 8th NRG meeting held on 20 June 2005 in Luxembourg-city. The strategic part of the DAP will be submitted for endorsement to the EU Council of Culture; the dynamic part of the plan will be undertaken by the NRG as its responsibility of operational implementation and reporting on progress to the Council on a regular basis. A document about redefined role and responsibilities for NRG with this commitment by the EU Council has been proposed to the NRG for comments.

- **Enlargement of the community**

The Luxembourg Presidency, benefitting from the initiative for a 'digitisation cluster' launched by MINERVA under the Italian Presidency, has established a cooperation platform with a number of experts and the most relevant current projects in Europe in order to enlarge the consensus and the support to the DAP and its operational implementation.

- **Future sustainability of the initiative**

Building on the work started under The Netherlands Presidency, the debate about sustainability has been carried forward and remains open. Member States should ensure commitment and endorsement to bring forward the coordination initiative. The support for coordination is demonstrated by the attendance of new countries at the 8th NRG meeting: Romania with the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Culture, and Turkey with a consultant of the Prime Minister is quite encouraging.

Some funding opportunities are under evaluation both for a secretary of the NRG and for the coordination of the expert workgroups, as well as for some operative projects in support of the DAP. In the meantime some Member State initiatives and current projects are actively supporting the NRG initiative.

- **Digital memory preservation**

The "Firenze agenda" experts group met in Rome on 4 February 2005 at a workshop organised by the Istituto Centrale Catalogo Unico and the DELOS project. The main goal was how to develop activity and define the features that would be necessary to create a Coordination Action on digital memory preservation. This action would aim to create awareness and consensus about risks and priorities, and also to prepare a research agenda for an action plan on the field. Some projects have already joined the initiative, to which UNESCO has already given full support. The workgroup has presented its goals at a Conference on 17-19 May in St. Petersburg, Russia.

- **International conference on future coordination of digitisation**

A conference was held in Luxembourg on the 21 and 22 June. The main goals of the event were the presentation of the DAP to the authorities, the European Commission, the cultural community, and the discussion for practical the implementation of the strategic objectives of the plan. A complete report of the conference including the 8th NRG meeting conclusions will be produced and distributed widely.

MINERVA PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST NRG MEETING

1. Dissemination

Since last NRG meeting in The Hague 17 September 2004, the wide dissemination of the NRG/MINERVA recommendations and guidelines continued through the organisation of MINERVA workshops and through the participation to major international conferences and seminars. MINERVA workshops took place in each country participating to MINERVA and MINERVA Plus.

Cooperation with UNESCO

MINERVA cooperated closely with UNESCO, particularly in the frame of the “*Information for All*” programme (IFAP) since 2003, on the initiative of Russia, through many conferences held in Kamchatka, Moscow and Saint Petersburg and other activities targeted to NIS. Common intents see a concrete implementation in the MEDCULT project which, with the support of the French network STRABON, will lead to translation into Arabic of the MINERVA products for web quality and to their diffusion in the countries around the **Mediterranean basin**.

The ROSTE UNESCO office particularly involved in south-eastern Europe (Regional Bureau for Science in Europe, UNESCO Venice Office) asked the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities - in its role of MINERVA co-ordinator – to be its partner in organising and running the **South Eastern European Regional Meeting on Digitisation of Cultural Heritage** (Ohrid, 17-20 March 2005), and to present the activities and projects of MINERVA and the co-ordination mechanisms of the NRG. Representatives from the following countries attended at the conference: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, F.Y.R.O.M., Moldavia, Romania, Serbia & Montenegro. The conference approved a final document that proposes a set of recommendations for the digitisation of the cultural heritage of south-eastern Europe, based on the Lund Principles and the Charter of Parma.

2. Publications

The third edition of the **Global Report** has been completed, with contributions from EU Member States and from observer countries, including Russia, Israel and representatives from the South Eastern Europe.

Translation and publication of the **Quality Principles Post Cards** is continuing. A printed version is currently available in English, French, Italian, German and Dutch/Flemish. The other national versions are published on-line and accessible both through the common MINERVA website and through the national MINERVA websites.

The Ten Quality Principles complemented by their commentary and by a practical checklist for evaluating the quality of a cultural website are published in the form of the **Quality principles for Cultural web-sites: a handbook** <http://www.minervaeurope.org/userneeds/qualityprinciples.htm> . The Handbook is printed in English, Italian and French, while numerous translations are published online and new translations are still under progress.

National websites were created in order to increase the national impact of MINERVA.

3. Spin-off projects

In addition to the UNESCO project mentioned before, the following two spin-off projects are progressing:

MICHAEL: Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe (www.michael-culture.org)

The current consortium includes Italy, France and the UK.

The enlargement of MICHAEL project to **MICHAELplus** has been proposed for funding to the European Commission, to include a large set of European countries that expressed their interest to join the deployment: Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, The Czech Republic and Hungary.

EURIDICE: European Recommended materials for Distance Learning Courses for Educator The negotiation of EURIDICE project is finished and the project is expected to start during summer. The project is coordinated by the Polish National Archive.

4. Working Groups

WP3 – Inventories, discovery of digitised content, multilingualism issues

Survey about Multilingual websites and thesauri, *Coordinated by Hungary*

Intermediate results are available on the Internet at: www.mek.oszk.hu/minerva/survey

A meeting of the working group has been organised by the WP Leader in **Budapest** November 2004, in order to assess the results achieved and to plan the remaining work.

Survey finished in June 2005 and full report, including country reports, is expected by the end of 2005, as part of the finalisation of MINERVA Plus project. Publication and dissemination of the report will follow.

WP4 – Interoperability and Service Provision

Inspection of the European legislation regarding Intellectual Property Rights , *Coordinated by Greece*

Draft **Report on IPR** European Legislation is now available on line on the MINERVA website (www.minervaeurope.org).

A guidance document on the application of IPR in the cultural sector, based on the work of the EMII-DCF project, has been drafted and will be published in November 2005. A more detailed study on the links between cultural sector content and the re-use in eLearning has been completed, and will be discussed at a workshop, probably to be held at EVA London 25-29 July 2005.

The UK Presidency is holding a **conference on IPR** 5-7 October 2005, where MINERVA representatives are expected to participate, and will be able to examine the potential of balanced approaches to IPR in the context of an event focussed on the Creative Industries. As part of the work of WP4, in addition to the work on IPR, translations and national adaptation of the **Technical Guidelines** is progressing and printed version in English is going to be available by second half of 2005.

WP5 – Identification of user needs, content and quality framework for common access points

& Small cultural institutions, *Coordinated by Belgium and Germany*

The MINERVA **Quality principles for Cultural web-sites: a handbook** is now available in paper version in English, Italian and French languages while numerous translations are published online and new translations are still under progress..

‘Post-cards’ presenting the 10 Quality Principles have been published both on paper and online.

Museo&Web, a prototype web-site for small and medium museums was created on the basis of these principles. The prototype is available free of charge. Validation of the prototype is in progress by several cultural institutions.

An **international conference on Quality of Cultural websites** has been organised in Berlin 7-8 April 2005, where all the MINERVA products with a focus on quality of cultural websites have been presented and discussed among the almost 100 participants from various EU countries.

WP6 – Identification of good practices and competence centres

Study about Cost Reduction, *Coordinated by Israel*

An **international workshop on cost reduction** took place in Fränsta, Sweden 25 January 2005. Proceedings of the workshop have been published on the MINERVA website. A full report on the issue is planned to be completed as part of the finalisation of the MINERVA Plus project, by end of 2005.

As part of the work of WP6, in addition to the work on Cost Reduction, a specific report on Best Practices for the digitisation of **audiovisual** cultural content is under revision. Final version of the report is expected to be completed by end of July 2005, for further dissemination. This is a quite interesting area where further investigation is expected to be carried out in the future.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (JULY – DECEMBER 2005)

For the second semester 2005 the UK Presidency has agreed to set out the following priorities:

1. To drive the process fine tuning of the DAP and the reconfirmation of the NRG.
2. To reinforce the spirit of cooperation amongst the NRG, and relations with the Commission
3. To support the development of proposals that will support the delivery of the DAP, and that will enable the work of the NRG to continue on an appropriate level
4. To plan the implementation of the i2010 proposal for a European Digital Library
5. To engage in the current debate about ensuring that IPR and Digital Rights Management maintains a fair balance between creators and users

The meeting agreed that the NRG members at national level should undertake and support the following actions, in addition to the ongoing support for the workgroups coordinated through MINERVA.

Practical actions to be undertaken before the next NRG meeting:

6. To drive the process fine tune the DAP and the renewal of the NRG.
7. To reinforce the spirit of cooperation amongst the NRG, and relations with the Commission
8. To support the development of proposals that will support the delivery of the DAP, and that will enable the work of the NRG to continue at an appropriate level
9. To plan the implementation of the i2010 proposal for a European Digital Library
10. To engage in the on-going debate about ensuring that IPR and Digital Rights Management maintains a fair balance between creators and users

The meeting agreed that the NRG members at national level should undertake and support the following actions, in addition to the ongoing support for the workgroups coordinated through MINERVA.

Practical actions to be undertaken before the next NRG meeting:

- To fine tune the DAP and prepare a document, agreed by the NRG, for the CAC by October 2005 (LUX will finalise the first part of the DAP)
- To prepare a strategy for renewal of the NRG by October 2005, and for the sustainability of a lightweight secretariat for the NRG (troika)
- To start preparing the 4th NRG progress report about activity in 2005 (LUX and UK and MINERVA)
- To organise the 9th NRG meeting on 17th November 2005 and a related conference on 16th November that will focus on the link between Culture and Learning in an online world (UK)
- To begin the process of prioritising the Operational Objectives in the DAP, and supporting the development of initiatives that may be supported by the IST and eContentplus funding programmes (NRG)
- To ensure that, wherever possible, proposals are coordinated by the NRG, reflect the quality of cultural and scholarly content from across Europe, and provide the best possible platform from which to tackle remaining research problems, particularly in Digital Preservation. (NRG)
- To ensure the maintenance of the products of flagship projects that have demonstrated their value to the cultural community.

CLOSING REMARKS

The NRG paid tribute to the Luxembourg Presidency's work in support of the DAP definition, as the successor of the Lund Action Plan, and at the strategic level the discussions on refined 'roles and responsibilities' for the NRG. At the practical level NRG welcomed the development of concrete results and products by the MINERVA workgroups, as well as the follow-up given to the former Presidencies work on digital preservation. In particular, the NRG considers that the effective cooperation and grouping started with some other projects and national initiatives is an added value really significant to reinforce the consensus and approach across Europe.

The United Kingdom Presidency will host the 9th NRG meeting in Bristol on 17 November 2005.

An additional EU Presidency Conference on 16 November will examine links between Culture and Learning in an online world.

The NRG thanked the Luxembourg Presidency for the hospitality, the organisation of and constructive input to the debate of this meeting.