National Policy Profile on Digitisation of Cultural and Scientific Content in GERMANY

Germany is a Federal State composed of 16 "Bundesländer" and one central government (Federal Government) for the country as a whole. According to the German constitution, for certain areas, prominently among them cultural affairs, primary responsibility lies with the 16 Bundesländer. For certain tasks, some of them related to the field of supporting **science and research**, there is some competence by the Federal government or the possibility of joint action by the Federal Government and the governments of the 16 Bundesländer (which may be fixed in specific agreements).
Since four years now, there is also a "Minister of State for Culture and Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media" (BKM) who is the addressee for cultural policy in the Federal government and who is to represent German culture in the European and international context.

There is no one single national policy on digitisation of cultural heritage in Germany. There is also not known to exist an overall strategy/policy plan yet for such matters at the level of one or more of the Bundesländer. There are, however, a number of individual plans, support frameworks, and funding schemes, usually under project frameworks, both at the level of the Federal government and at that of the 16 Bundesländer, which do support activities such as digitisation. Some of these schemes do correspond to, or have even been caused by, EU initiatives like "eEurope", "e-learning" etc.

In September 2002, the Federal Ministry for **Education and Research** (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung) published a strategic paper on "Link information - activate knowledge" (= "Informationen vernetzen - Wissen aktivieren").

And there is the possibility of support schemes not limited by geographical coverage, implemented by semi-government authorities like the "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG" (**National Research Council**), especially in the sector of supporting universities and scientific research agencies/projects. For example, a principal scheme does exist for the retrospective digitisation of library holdings, under the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - German Research Council). There are also funding opportunities, case by case, from such sources as regional "Lotto" funds, endowments like the "VW-Stiftung" etc.

At present, an initiative is underway to develop a co-operation platform on long-term availability of digital documents ("Forum Langzeitverfügbarkeit" ; contact: Ute Schwens, schwens@dbf.ddb.de), at the moment largely driven from the library sector, but with museums and archives involved.

A **formal WG, chaired by Prof. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of the Foundation Prussian Heritage, has been established** in Germany in September 2001, named "EUBAM" ("European matters concerning libraries, archives, museums"), as a single contact point for all questions
- relating to EU (funding) programmes on digitisation, as they are relevant for libraries, archives, museums in Germany, and to spread information about these widely in Germany,
- concerning applications to/participation in EU-funded programmes by German libraries, archives, museums, to encourage and support applications from Germany,
- concerning information sought by EU bodies on digitisation programmes, achievements, and contents available in German libraries, archives and museums,
- concerning representation in relevant EU Working Groups by German libraries, archives, museums.
www.eubam.de