[DE] Bundestag Adopts Proposal for Digitisation Offensive

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On 26 January 2012, the German Bundestag (lower house of parliament - BT), thanks to the votes of the ruling parties, adopted a proposal for a “digitisation offensive for our cultural heritage”.

The proposal states, firstly, that the digitisation of cultural assets and knowledge is aimed at their long-term protection and accessibility by the public. The Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library - DDB), which is being developed jointly by federal, regional and district public authorities, is particularly designed to make this possible. Through the wide-ranging digitisation of cultural assets and scientific information of all kinds, the (digital) services of the different German institutions could be networked together, made publicly accessible free of charge and centrally, and integrated into the European digital library, Europeana (see IRIS 2011-4/6). Particularly in view of the danger of losing such works and information - through natural disasters or decay, for example - there is a possibility of at least preserving digital copies and reproductions for posterity. In addition, open public access to this content would, in the long term, lead to a “democratisation of culture and knowledge”, since all sections of the population could be reached. With reference to the recommendations of the Comité des Sages on the digitisation of the European cultural heritage, which also mention the considerable cost of digitisation (see IRIS 2011-3/5), the proposal supports the use of public-private partnerships to finance the necessary measures. Under such partnerships, the public’s right to information and the commercial interests of the private companies involved must be fairly balanced. This is partly the responsibility of the “Kompetenznetzwerk DDB” (DDB competence network) made up of representatives of 13 notable cultural and scientific institutions and of the “Kuratorium” (committee) comprising representatives of federal, regional and district authorities. The fulfilment of the digitisation concept is also dependent on clear legislation on out-of-print and orphan works.

In this connection, the BT expressly welcomes the measures already taken to digitise cultural assets and knowledge and to seek cooperation with private companies.

Finally, the members of parliament call on the federal government to step up its efforts to expand the technical infrastructure of the DDB and digitisation measures, to look for other possible sources of finance and, in particular, to

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regulate the use of orphan works in the “third basket” of copyright law.

Bundestag, Antrag (Drs. 17/6315) vom 29. Juni 2011

http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/063/1706315.pdf

Bundestag, proposal (no. 17/6315) of 29 June 2011

Bericht zur Bundestagssitzung vom 26. Januar 2012

http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/17/17155.pdf

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