

Council of the EU: Conclusions on Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material and Digital Preservation

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During the Council meeting of 10-11 May 2012, the Council released its conclusions on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation. These conclusions are a follow up to the Commission Recommendation of the same name (see IRIS 2012-1/4) and refer to the Comité des Sages' report "New Renaissance" (see IRIS 2011-3/5) as well as to the Commission's recent legislative proposals (orphan works, re-use of public sector information). In 2006, the Council had already issued conclusions on the same topic but since that date, the Council notes that the context for digitisation has changed, notably with the launch of Europeana.

In its introduction, the Council considers that digitised cultural materials are an importance resource for cultural and creative industries and also contribute to economic growth and job creation. Although efforts have already been made in the field of digitisation, further steps are necessary to exploit cultural heritage and turn it into an asset for European citizens. This includes better coordination of member states' actions.

The conclusions are largely focused on the development, use and support of Europeana. The Council invites the member states, the Commission and Europeana to make further progress. In an annex to the conclusions, the Council addresses specific priorities for member states in the format of actions and objectives for the period 2012-2015:

- Consolidation of their strategies and targets for digitisation (e.g., development of standards to select materials to digitise and participation in the Commission's assessment of the progress of digitisation and digital preservation);
- Consolidation of the organisation of digitisation and funding thereof (through public-private partnerships or the use of EU Structural Funds);
- Improvement of the conditions for granting online access to materials (tools to facilitate accessibility to out-of-commerce works and the specific issue of digitisation of public domain materials);
- Participation in the development of Europeana (through seven action points);

- Maintenance of the long-term digital preservation (including the promotion of specific strategies, the exchange of information between member states as well as the setup of the legal conditions for copying and depositing materials)

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http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/130120.pdf

