



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND
TECHNOLOGY

Data
Interactive Technologies, Digital for Culture and Education

Meeting with pan-European / international organisations and networks on digital for cultural heritage

15 March 2022 (Webex)

Minutes

1. MEETING GOALS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

The meeting on digital for cultural heritage between pan-European and international organisations and European Commission/DG CONNECT G2 on 15 March 2022 aimed at continuing the discussions of the meeting held in December 2019 and bringing together important actors of the field in order to continue these meetings on a regular basis. The agenda of the meeting included an update on some important policy developments by DG CONNECT and an exchange of views about the future in the light of events and rapidly changing environment of the past two years.

The meeting opened with welcoming words and updates by DG CONNECT with a focus on policy coordination and funding initiatives. The presentation started with the wider policy framework embedded in the communication of the European Commission “Path to the Digital Decade” and described the recently adopted Recommendation on a Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage with its main elements and objectives. It also presented the Data Spaces under the Digital Europe Programme with an emphasis on the Data Space for Cultural Heritage.

2. SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES COVERED

Session 1:

Post-pandemic opportunities and challenges:

- *What is the post-pandemic outlook for you?*
- *How did your organisation change digitally? How did it affect the way you operate and reach out to your constituencies and stakeholders?*
- *What opportunities do you see for the future? How would these affect your main priorities for next years?*

Overall, the Digital Decade ambitions were well received by the participants who felt that these entail a behavioural change in society that will be an essential foundation for technological change, where motivation is value driven.

The pandemic has reinforced the need to accelerate the digital transformation of the Cultural Heritage sector. Where digital used to be seen as supplementary to mainstream cultural heritage, it is now an integral part of it. This is particularly true for born digital that used to be seen as a threat rather than part of authentic heritage.

However, the pandemic has also had an adverse influence on the levels of digitisation of Cultural Heritage that may have stalled during the past 2 years. There are, additionally, a number of obstacles to tackle. Many organisations do not have a digital strategy in place. There is also a certain digital reluctance by stakeholders and data owners hiding behind Intellectual Property Rights issues.

Skilling and upskilling remain an issue from a number of aspects. It is now widely acknowledged that many institutions were not prepared for the challenges of the pandemic. They also lack necessary guidance how to measure the reception and impact of their actions to tackle those challenges. Small organisations have also lost staff along the way. The remaining staff have the needed digital outlook but may lack other skills needed to make the transformation work in a broader sense. The need to upskill and understand the whole process of digitisation is essential. Besides the skills gap, not having enough tools available is also an obstacle. Standards are being developed, but they are often not known enough and are thus not applied. Digital leadership and digital literacy are especially important. There is a digital literacy gap also at the top.

Participants also highlighted the need to consider the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should be built into policies including KPIs and practices in order to achieve a holistic view of digital.

In relation to the wider use of 3D, for digital collections, resolution is a challenge as lower resolution provides wider access but limits opportunity for re-use. There are also difficulties related to publishing 3D models online with the available technological means. Text-based material creates additional challenges for 3D digitisation, especially in the case of historical languages. There is a need to bring new technologies to advance preservation of cultural heritage. Also, storage on a privately owned space raises a number of concerns in the long term.

Session 2 and take-aways

Cultural Heritage Data Space:

- *What opportunities do you envision for your activities within the forthcoming European Data Space on Cultural Heritage?*
- *What measures are needed to accelerate its development?*
- *In what ways can we work together to exploit the full potential of the data space?*

The Data Space for Cultural Heritage is a major opportunity and in this context, it is essential to expand the current network and the role of national domain aggregators as well as creating national digital strategies.

The Europeana system relies strongly on metadata standards that will need to evolve to reflect the richness of the data available within the data space. Definitions and technical specifications in this respect will be of fundamental importance for Cultural Heritage Institutions to be able to participate in the data space. Additionally, possible data spaces at Member State level as well as research infrastructures and networks will need to be linked to foster synergies.

Interoperability is another crucial element of the data space. In this context language technologies, i.e. translation between metadata languages should be developed. Research infrastructures can also have a role to play in the Data Space.

The opportunities embedded in crowdsourcing were weighed against the need for coordination. Regarding cultural heritage at risk, several outstanding issues were identified. There is no register of highly frequented monuments/sites available, which is a problem as they can also be at risk, following climate change, vandalism etc. In this context *7 most endangered programme*, *Scan the world* and the German *Data space for culture* were mentioned as prospective initiative to cooperate with the forthcoming data space.

In the closing remarks, Rehana Schwinninger-Ladak thanked for the good and fruitful discussion, especially mentioning creation of joint projects regarding risk heritage and the numerous interesting comments on 3D aspects and crowdsourcing.

It should be further discussed what joint products can be used to bring together the data space.

DG CONNECT will follow up in bilateral consultations with relevant organisations and plan on repeating this meeting in one year (virtual or physical).

Useful links shared during the meeting:

Open call in the Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL):

https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/calls-proposals/data-space-cultural-heritage-deployment_en

Digital incubator for museums (DOORS) project:

<https://ars.electronica.art/doors>

Competence Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage (4CH):

<https://www.4ch-project.eu>

Scan the world:

<https://www.myminifactory.com/scantheworld>

7 Most Endangered Programme:

<https://www.europanostra.org/our-work/campaigns/7-most-endangered/>

Giravolt:

<https://sketchfab.com/giravolt>

eArchiving:

<https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20211022072922/https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eArchiving>

eArchiving LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8343650>

Basic principles and tips for 3D digitisation of cultural heritage (guidelines):

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/basic-principles-and-tips-3d-digitisation-cultural-heritage>

CIPA 3x3 Rules:

<https://www.cipaheritagedocumentation.org/activities/publications/>

Wikimedia initiatives:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Content_Partnerships_Hub/Connected_Open_Heritage

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Content_Partnerships_Hub/FindingGLAMs

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Structured_data/GLAM/Why#Translatability

	Organisation	Name
1.	Blue Shield International	Anna PUHR
2.	CLARIN ERIC	Maria ESKEVICH Franciska DE JONG
3.	DARIAH-EU	Suzanne DUMOUCHEL
4.	European Museum Academy (EMA)	Jill COUSINS
5.	Europa Nostra	Lorena ALDANA-ORTEGA Graham BELL
6.	European Commission (DG CONNECT)	Rehana SCHWINNINGER-LADAK Anne BAJART Arpad WELKER Katerina MOUTOGIANNI Fulgencio SANMARTIN Vitis FAURE TILGAARD Ann NILSSON
7.	Europeana	Harry VERWAYEN Eleanor KENNY
8.	Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA)	Christa ENGEL
9.	International Committee for Documentation (ICOM / CIDOC)	Monika HAGEDORN-SAUPE
10.	International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)	Andreas GEORGOPOULOS
11.	Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO)	Elisabeth ROSENBERG
12.	Wikimedia Sverige	John ANDERSSON