

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

Council conclusions of 10 May 2010 on Europeana: next steps

(2010/C 137/07)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

WHEREAS:

- the creation of the European digital library Europeana, which is an online multilingual access point to digital cultural material from the whole of Europe (books, newspapers, photographs, films and audiovisual works, documents from archives, museum works, architectural and archaeological heritage, etc.) provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the cultural heritage of the Member States, as well as to increase access to, and knowledge of, that heritage,
- the digitisation and online accessibility of the Member States cultural material, and digital preservation, are essential in order to highlight that cultural heritage, to inspire the creation of content and to encourage new online services to emerge,

RECALLING:

- The Council conclusions of 13 November 2006 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation,
- The Council conclusions of 20 November 2008 on the European digital library, Europeana, which gave a first policy impetus to the development of this common platform for accessing Europe's cultural heritage,
- The Final Report of the High-Level Expert Group on Digital Libraries 'Digital Libraries: Recommendations and Challenges for the Future',

WELCOMES WITH INTEREST:

- The communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 28 August 2009 'Europeana — next steps', which launched a consultation process aimed at analysing the most appropriate ways of guaranteeing that Europeana and the underlying policies on digitisation, online accessibility and digital preservation provide European culture with lasting visibility in the digital environment,
- The aim of making 10 million digitised works available online through Europeana by the end of 2010,
- The communication from the Commission of 19 October 2009 'Copyright in the Knowledge Economy', which explicitly addresses the emerging legal challenges for libraries and archives when digitising their collections,

ACKNOWLEDGES WITH INTEREST:

- Following discussions at the Education Youth and Culture Council meeting of 27 November 2009, the creation by the Commission of a European reflection group (comité des sages) on digitisation, that will consider in particular the issues related to public-private partnerships; invites the group to undertake wide consultations and make best use of contributions provided by Member States and the relevant stakeholders, and to provide regular information on its activities, as appropriate,

NOTES:

- The progress made so far, which has led to the creation of the 'European Digital Library' Foundation and to the launch of the Europeana prototype on 20 November 2008, as a decisive step in this process,

- That the next milestones will be the presentation of 'Europeana 1.0' in 2010 and the subsequent consolidation of the platform,

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The organisational, legal and financial challenges for the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, as well as for digital preservation, such as issues related to intellectual property rights and the need to find complementary funding for digitisation, which could include public-private partnerships,
- The importance of ensuring that these challenges are tackled by the Commission and the Member States in parallel with the steps outlined below, in order to consolidate Europeana as a core structure and common access point to cultural content,
- The need for the Member States and the Commission, as well as the bodies and institutions actively involved in Europeana, to increase their efforts to expand and enrich Europeana in the coming years, both in quantitative and qualitative terms,

UNDERLINES THAT:

- Europeana should continue its development as a collaborative endeavour of Europe's cultural institutions, and its work on improving the portal — including a more coherent and appealing presentation of the digitised items, tackling multilingual aspects, and enhancing the search facilities — in order to meet users' needs and expectations,
- For the long-term consolidation of Europeana a sustainable funding and governance model should take into consideration the role of Europeana to offer on a cross-border basis the widest possible access to cultural collections, the European scope and nature of the site, and also the considerable role played by cultural institutions,
- The digitisation and online accessibility of our cultural heritage should be carried out in full respect of intellectual property rights; there is a need to make rapid progress in finding workable solutions for digitising out-of-print and out-of-distribution works and bringing them online, and for addressing the orphan works issue,

CONSIDERS THAT, FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEANA, IT IS NECESSARY TO:

- Increase the number of objects, both public domain works and works covered by intellectual property rights, from libraries, museums, archives, and audiovisual collections

accessible through the portal, in full respect of intellectual property rights, while providing at the same time a qualitative approach which showcases the diversity and richness of Europe's cultural heritage; continue joint work to ensure the widest availability of public domain works after their digitisation,

- Continue efforts to stimulate a broader geographical spread and to find a better balance between the different types of content offered through Europeana (books, photographs, archival documents, cinematographic and audiovisual material, museum collections, etc.) taking into account the particular needs of resource-intensive types of content such as audiovisual material,
- Fully take into account linguistic diversity as one of the key characteristics of Europe's heritage, and enhance the multilingual features of the Europeana site, in particular by tackling cross-language search and automatic translation,
- Ensure a central place for the user, and continue the analysis of users' needs and profiles, also with a view to identifying specific applications and mechanisms, including those encouraging interactivity by enabling users to make an active contribution to the site, while at the same time undertaking the necessary steps to ensure that content is uploaded in respect of the relevant legal provisions. Where possible, new Europeana applications should use open formats, in order to allow the involvement of the largest possible community of developers and facilitate appropriate reuse and adaptation of Europeana software components to other contexts,
- Raise awareness of Europeana among cultural institutions across Europe which could contribute content, and among the potential users of the site. In this context, collaboration with the educational and research sectors could play a significant role and should be further explored,
- Take into account the diversity of the various cultural institutions in Europe, in order to ensure that all institutions, including the smallest ones, have the possibility to participate in the development of Europeana,
- Continue working on a set of clear and broadly accepted minimum interoperability standards and promote their application by the institutions which provide the contents. This will help cultural institutions to take into account the need for consistent metadata of high quality in the digitisation process, which are of key importance when searching for digitised objects and establishing correlations between them,

- Work towards a sustainable financing and governance model for Europeana as a common access point to Europe's cultural heritage, and ensure optimal use of the financial instruments available for funding digitisation at the national and European level,
- Explore the possible role of public-private partnerships for digitisation with a view to increasing the collections accessible through Europeana, taking account of the need to appropriately protect the interests of right-holders, users and contributing institutions,

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- Continue working jointly towards the goals set by the Council conclusions of 13 November 2006 on national strategies for the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation, and by those of 20 November 2008 on the accessibility of digitised material through the European Digital Library 'Europeana',
- Continue and strengthen their support to digitisation projects carried out by their cultural institutions in order to increase the number of objects from libraries, museums, archives and audiovisual collections from all Member States and promote, e.g. through conditions for financing digitisation, their availability through Europeana and the widest access for users to content,
- Continue to raise awareness among cultural institutions at all territorial levels, for example by organising information sessions to encourage them to provide their content to Europeana either directly or via national, regional or thematic aggregators,
- Provide until the end of 2013, on a voluntary basis and pending the development of a sustainable funding and

governance model, the necessary level of support to Europeana as a complement to Community funding,

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

- Contribute to raising awareness among the general public about Europeana, for example by organising campaigns in collaboration with the cultural institutions to make the site known among its potential users,
- Facilitate and encourage the implementation of a set of clear and shared minimum interoperability standards for the digitised cultural content of Europeana,
- Develop, within the framework of the Member States' Expert Group on Digitisation and Digital Preservation and in collaboration with Europeana, a roadmap with recommendations for increasing the content accessible through Europeana in a balanced way, covering all Member States and sectors (text, audio, sound, image) and including the masterpieces of Europe's cultural heritage selected by Member States; and to continue in the context of this Expert Group their collaboration with Europeana on issues related to the governance and financing model and the strategic orientation of the site.

INVITES, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE 2014-2020 FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK, THE COMMISSION TO:

Consider presenting within the appropriate time frame and taking into account these conclusions, proposals for the sustainable financing of Europeana post-2013 and of related policies, accompanied by a vision, including governance issues, for consolidating and developing Europeana as an essential and pre-eminent reference tool for the digital era, which will make European cultural heritage accessible to all and enhance its appeal and relevance for current and future generations.