



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 21.9.2012  
SWD(2012) 263 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
*Accompanying the document*  
**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL**

**SUMMARY**

**EUROPEAN ARCHIVES GROUP**

**ARCHIVES IN EUROPE**  
**FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL ERA**  
**2nd Progress Report to the Council**

{ COM(2012) 513 final }

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
*Accompanying the document*

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL**

**SUMMARY**

**EUROPEAN ARCHIVES GROUP**

**ARCHIVES IN EUROPE  
FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL ERA  
2nd Progress Report to the Council**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction.....	3
1. Co-operation in the field of archives in Europe .....	3
2. Archives in the digital era.....	3
2.1 The changing role of Archives .....	3
2.2 On-site versus online access to archives.....	3
2.3 Archives and the Directive on the Re-use of Public Sector Information .....	3
2.4 Digitisation .....	3
2.5 Costs and funding .....	3
3. Conclusions .....	3
4. Decisions and recommendations .....	3
Decisions.....	3
Recommendations.....	3

## INTRODUCTION

In November 2005 the Council of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on increased cooperation in the field of archives in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Council Recommendation asked for the creation of a European Archives Group (EAG) comprising experts designated by the Member States and the EU institutions to ensure cooperation and coordination on general matters relating to archives. The Council further recommended five priority measures that the EAG should follow-up. In 2008 the EAG submitted a Progress Report to the Council on the implementation of the recommendation.<sup>2</sup>

In its 2008 progress report, the EAG noted that digital recordkeeping is changing the relations between archives services and records creators as well as the role that archives and archivists fulfil in public administration and society. The report concluded that archives services should examine their role in more detail and assess the significance of existing archival concepts, procedures and processes.

After reporting to the Council, the EAG created three working groups to examine some of the main challenges facing archives services in Europe:

- Archives and the European directive for the re-use of public sector information;
- The relationship between on-site and online access to archives;
- Digital record keeping: consequences for administration and society and the changing role of Archives.

Four years after its first Progress Report, the EAG is submitting a follow-up report. This report is structured as follows.

Chapter 1 provides a short summary of the most important aspects of European cooperation between archives since 2008. It includes a short update on cooperation in the DLM Forum and the ongoing development of requirements for the management of electronic records. It also provides a short review of the cooperation between European archives services to develop a European archives portal.

Chapter 2 is based on reports of the three working groups which were presented and discussed at the tenth meeting of the EAG in Budapest on 11 May 2011. This chapter reviews some aspects of archives in the digital era, including the current role of archives, online versus on-site access, the re-use of public sector information from archives, the digitisation of archives and some funding issues.

Chapter 3 formulates the conclusions while Chapter 4 provides some recommendations for continued cooperation between archives in Europe in the coming years.

A first draft of this report was discussed at the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EAG in Krakow on 7 October 2011. At that meeting the EAG decided to create a drafting group for further

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 312, 29.11.2005, p.55

<sup>2</sup> Progress Report to the Council SEC(2008)2364; COM(2008)500

review. The drafting group submitted a revised draft to the EAG which adopted the report in Copenhagen on 30 May 2012.

## **1. CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ARCHIVES IN EUROPE**

The European Archives Group was created in early 2006 following the adoption of the Council Recommendation on cooperation between archives in November 2005. It seeks to promote cooperation and coordination between archives at the European level and notably where this can provide real added value.

The EAG meets twice every year. Its activities and agenda are planned by the Commission in cooperation with those National Archives<sup>3</sup> that represent the current and forthcoming EU Presidencies. Since the second semester of 2009, EAG meetings have been held jointly with the meeting of the European Board of National Archivists (EBNA) and have been hosted by the EU Presidency. With a view to further streamlining coordination between archives and avoiding a duplication of effort, the EAG will seek to further develop its cooperation with EBNA.

The EAG has continued to provide general orientations and guidance on the implementation of the priority actions of the 2005 Recommendation.

### *Preservation and disaster prevention*

A tri-national working group of archives in Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany exchanges information and expertise on disaster prevention and recovery and related preservation issues. The working group has organised successful emergency training sessions on ‘rescuing archives’ and has launched a website with relevant information for all archives, the European Archival Network for Disaster Management ([Euraned](#)). The working group reports to the EAG on a regular basis.

### *European interdisciplinary co-operation on electronic documents and archives: the DLM Forum and MoReq2010*

The [DLM Forum](#) was originally created by the Commission in cooperation with member states’ archives in 1996. It has since developed into an independent, not-for-profit organisation bringing together interested parties in electronic records and archives management from both the public and private sectors throughout Europe. Its membership includes most of the National Archives of the EU member states.

The DLM Forum has been instrumental in the development of model requirements for the management of electronic records (MoReq). MoReq was first developed by the Commission in cooperation with the DLM Forum in 2001, and subsequently expanded and updated in 2008 with funding from the EU’s IDA/IDABC programmes.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The organisation of state archives differs between member states. In this report ‘National Archives’ refers to the national archival authority, whether this is a National Archive, State Archive or National archives administration.

<sup>4</sup> Three member states, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia, have adopted legislation or regulatory requirements for records management based on or inspired by MoReq2.

The most recent version, MoReq2010, was developed by the DLM Forum. The name was changed to *modular* requirements to accentuate the shift from monolithic, one-size-fits-all, records management systems to a more flexible approach, in line with the most recent technological developments and user expectations. The flexible approach adopted in MoReq2010 is welcomed by the National Archives and is seen as an example for the development of standards in the field of digitisation, such as standards for capture and delivery systems.

MoReq2010 is managed by the DLM Forum and is increasingly perceived by both users and vendors as a potential European standard for records systems. It provides for full interoperability between MoReq compliant systems. The DLM Forum is establishing a compliance testing regime that will allow vendors across Europe to seek certification of their products.

The DLM Forum reports regularly to the EAG. It holds members' meetings twice every year and organises triennial conferences. The last such conference was held in Brussels in December 2011.

### *An internet portal for documents and archives in Europe*

The project to create an internet portal for archives in Europe, APEnet, was launched in early 2009 with funding from the EU's *eContentplus* programme. Its objective was to collect existing digital archives content and to provide online access via a portal. The project uses proven existing archival standards. It provides guidance and tools that are made available to all European archives wishing to contribute content and descriptions from their holdings.

The APEnet project was coordinated by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. A pilot portal was launched in January 2011 and a full version of the [Archives Portal Europe](#) became available in January 2012.

In March 2012 a follow-up project, APEX<sup>5</sup>, coordinated by the National Archives of the Netherlands, was launched. The project builds on the achievements of APEnet. It seeks to widen, deepen, improve and sustain the delivery of archival content to the Archives Portal Europe. The number of participating National Archives has increased from 19 to 27<sup>6</sup> in the new project. Further cooperation between APEX and Europeana should be explored in order to guarantee that APEX can fully play its part of aggregator for the European archival domain.

### *Future Challenges*

The 2008 Progress Report identified five challenges for archives in the future. The EAG focussed on especially three of these challenges, all related to the role and position of archives in the digital era:

- archives and the Directive on the re-use of public sector information;

---

<sup>5</sup> Archives Portal Europe network of eXcellence.

<sup>6</sup> This includes 22 National Archives from EU member states. One acceding country, one candidate country and two EEA countries also participate in the project while Switzerland is an associated partner.

- the question of online versus on-site access to archives;
- the consequences of digital record keeping for administration and society and the changing role of archives.

In 2009 the EAG created three working groups to examine these issues. In 2010 it conducted a survey of all EU National Archives. The findings of the working groups were presented to the meeting in Budapest in May 2011. They form the basis for chapter two of this report.

## **2. ARCHIVES IN THE DIGITAL ERA**

Over the past decades the use of ICT in society has become commonplace. It has radically affected the manner in which we communicate, use and access information. New technologies, their practical applications and the way in which they are used, continue to evolve at an almost frantic pace. It is evident that this has fundamentally changed the functioning of public administrations and how they store and access knowledge and information.

This has far-reaching consequences for archives. Archives are the ultimate custodians of the records of public administrations and will continue to be responsible for them long after the records creators themselves have ceased to care or even exist. At the same time archives have a public task to provide information, even as the expectations and requirements of citizens for access to information are radically changing. The digitisation of society is changing the relationship between archives and records creators as well as between archives and users and will affect the role that archives and archivists fulfil in society.

It has become inevitable that National Archives examine their position between the records creators, such as government, and the users, both government and citizens. The situation in the EU member states varies as it is influenced by different archival traditions and different legislative environments. At the core there is nevertheless much that is similar and much that archives can learn from each other.

### **2.1 The changing role of Archives**

National Archives have a wider responsibility than only the care for their own collections. They are actively looking at their current and future responsibilities in order to find an answer to the question about the role that they can play in the digital world. How can their expertise be used? To what extent will their current role remain relevant and how can they best ensure that their expertise and knowledge continues to prove useful in the future?

The answer to these questions has to do with the image of archives and archivists in society and with their relations with government and other actors in each member state.

Although the situation between the various National Archives varies considerably, there are also significant similarities. The primary role of most of the National Archives in the EU is to provide access to public records, both to the institutions that created and deposited them and to citizens. A core responsibility for the large majority of archives is the appraisal (selection) of the archives that they take in, i.e. they play an important role in deciding which records are kept and which are not and they are generally involved in defining records management policy in the public sector.

As increasing quantities of data are being created in digital form by the public sector, archivists have to develop new techniques and processes to meet the challenges presented by this digital material. These challenges raise complex issues. Digital formats are diverse, ranging from simple word processed documents or images of documents to complex interactive datasets. New approaches to appraisal, cataloguing and providing access are required as well as earlier engagement with the bodies that create and manage the records.

National Archives are at different stages of development in these areas and would benefit from strategies and best practice being identified and shared.

There are considerable differences in Europe with respect to the management of digital repositories. The importance and complexity of properly maintaining and managing digital repositories should not be underestimated. At present, National Archives manage digital repositories for public sector archives in approximately half the member states and provide services for the transfer and storage of digital archives. Two thirds of the National Archives also have other roles in relation to digital repositories, including especially the roles of inspection, access provider and appraisal.

The transfer and preservation of born-digital records is a challenge of growing importance and calls for increased cooperation and exchange of solutions and best practices between archives. This is for instance relevant in terms of suitable document formats for long term preservation, formats for database preservation, identification of significant properties to be preserved from digital objects and cost models for digital preservation. The DLM Forum may be able to play a valuable part in this process.

Furthermore, archives need to address the issue of data protection. The proposal for a new European Regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data could make it difficult to continue the current practice in some member states for the appraisal, preservation and eventual delivery of access to born-digital records containing personal data.

The National Archives will work to balance their mandate and responsibilities with other interests such as data protection. To this end they will seek to cooperate more closely with other information management networks and bodies, including e-government agencies.

## **2.2 On-site versus online access to archives**

The balance of access to archives across Europe is changing as internet technologies become more widespread and as the archives put more material online. National archives already commonly make their finding aids available for remote searching and are increasingly also making digitised archival documents available online. Not all archive documents can be put online and there will always be constraints as a result of preservation needs, data protection requirements or the costs of digital capture. However, there is no doubt that more archive material will become available on the web in the future and that online access will sooner or later become the most common form of access. This will change the nature of access and how archives are used.

The question is what priority national archives should give to the different types of access, what the relationship is between online and on-site visits and visitors and whether one type of access affects the other.

Some archives see a reduction in on-site visits that coincides with an increasing availability of archive material on the internet. It is not clear however whether this is a common experience across Europe and different types of archive institutions, nor is it clear that the availability of material online is the cause of reduced on-site visits or whether other factors could also be at work.



The European Archives Group has examined the changing balance between online and on-site access to archives and the implications for European archive services. Although family historians enjoy online access to digital images and indexes in a number of member states, this service has not yet been systematically extended to other user groups. Some user groups may be too small to make this viable. Archives therefore need to consider ways to extend the use of the same information beyond the initial, obvious users while continuing to guarantee the authenticity of the material they hold. Making information as widely available as possible allows third parties to use it in creative ways which an archive might not have considered or have had the means to develop.

With few exceptions, National Archives have not yet made changes to their reading rooms or archival storage facilities as a consequence of digitisation. The EAG study shows that archives in the EU are just starting a process that could eventually lead to a more complete online service. There is a clear trend towards a step by step approach whereby finding aids, catalogues and indexes are digitised first and the digitised documents are made available to the public in a second phase.

Archival holdings can be complex and difficult to navigate. Finding aids should give a reasonable chance to use digitised material independently. However, users often require some kind of personal contact with the archival institution in order to be able to use the archives. Archivists will therefore remain necessary to guarantee a good quality of service. In the digital world they will have to leave traditional ways of working behind and find new ways of communication with users. Archives services should also make more use of the possibilities offered by web 2.0 and 3.0 technologies to develop innovative services for the public. Possibilities include collaborative tagging, collaborative identification of visual documents and publication platforms where readers can use and edit information from finding aids and digitised documents as well as the new potential of semantic techniques.

Archives need to identify the needs of their users to define the balance between on-site and online services and decide which services should be developed, which should be retained and which can be discarded or given a lower priority. It is essential that information is available where the users are and a vital part of modern democracy is to be able to search and find digitised archival information online.

### **2.3 Archives and the Directive on the Re-use of Public Sector Information**

The purpose of the 2003 Directive on Public Sector Information (PSI)<sup>7</sup> is to remove obstacles to the re-use of public sector information in order to encourage the private sector and others to develop value added products and services based on it. In December 2011 the European Commission proposed a revision which will bring archives, museums and libraries into the scope of the Directive.<sup>8</sup> However, in recognition of the special nature of these bodies, the obligations facing them are not as extensive as they are for other public sector bodies.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> OJ L345 31.12.2003, p. 90. By May 2008 all member states had transposed the Directive into their national legislation.

<sup>8</sup> COM(2011)877 final of 12 December 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Charges for the re-use of documents from public sector bodies are limited to the marginal costs incurred for their reproduction and dissemination but an exception is made for archives, museums

Commercial interest in archival information, in itself not new, has been greatly enhanced by the development of imaging technologies and the internet which have revolutionised access to the holdings of archive institutions. The re-use of public sector information is increasing interest and engagement with ways of using and adding value to this information. For example, datasets may include statistical information about a population which would allow a company to identify trends and adapt its marketing or production appropriately, or civil society organisations to use the information in similar ways to help communities. It may also be possible to combine datasets of different information (e.g. population statistics, geographical information) to produce new information of value to organisations, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

### *Applying the Directive to Archives*

Encouraging public use of the information contained in archives is part of the mission of national archival institutions. It might even be described as an essential part of their *raison d'être*. However, re-use of archives by the private sector raises various issues such as intellectual property rights, data protection, charging policy and the balance between public and private services. Archives will need to examine the administrative and financial consequences and the impact on the services that are already provided today.

The Directive does not yet apply to archives and in most member states it has not yet had a large impact on the work of national archive organisations. Only a few have developed policies for re-use or considered how to promote this. The degree of interest from the private sector and the potential size of the market also play a role in this.

The most developed policies on reuse are found in Finland and the United Kingdom. Finnish practices were already in line with the Directive and only minor changes to existing laws were needed to fulfil its requirements. In the United Kingdom, The National Archives (TNA) incorporates the Office for Public Sector Information (OPSI), the UK government body with responsibility for promoting and regulating the re-use of public sector information. TNA has gone perhaps furthest in working with the private sector to make information accessible through both public and commercial websites, aimed particularly at the family history market.

Archives face a number of barriers to the implementation of the directive, including a lack of common standards and metadata, privacy legislation, intellectual property rights issues and budget limitations. In general these barriers are not perceived as fundamental impediments. It should be examined to what extent the most common barriers are related to budgetary limitations and whether a common model for re-use of public sector information could be helpful in this respect. Are, for example, privacy legislation and intellectual property rights navigable if further resources are made available to tackle these issues?

There may be more fundamental tensions, at least in some archives, between re-use of public sector information for commercial purposes and the respect of archival practices. Some archives are wary of the unknown consequences for the archival institution of relinquishing control over use of archival material to commercial organisations. They fear

---

and libraries which "may charge over and above the marginal costs for the re-use of documents they hold".

that once it is out of their hands they will no longer be able to exercise one of their most important responsibilities, i.e. to guarantee the authenticity of archival information.<sup>10</sup> To some extent this is exactly the point of the Directive, that the private sector may find novel, even radical ways of reusing information, far removed from its original purpose. However, it does point to a need to ensure that information re-use is carefully licensed.<sup>11</sup>

A second tension is the fear of what is seen as the privatisation of the free provision of access to archives, or in other words that the commercial right to re-use information could lead to a reduction in public access because of charges levied for access. Although it is clearly not the intention of the Directive to restrict access to information, how could archives ensure that this is not an unintended consequence? This concern needs to be kept in view and managed as a risk with policies to avoid or mitigate it occurring. For example, it would be possible for access to digitised records to be provided free of charge on-site but to levy charges to remote users. The public would pay only for the added-value service of remote access.

Archives need to think ahead in order to ensure that they have policies and procedures in place to deal with the implications of the Directive. Sharing experiences between National Archives will help those just starting out on this road to learn from others who are already some way along it.

## 2.4 Digitisation

Digitisation and online publication allow archives to make more material available both to the academic community (remote research) and to a wider public. It also facilitates the re-use of information from archives.

Digitisation policy varies from one member state to the next. Generally speaking, the National Archives will digitise those archives that are most heavily used, of most interest to researchers or that are most relevant for the history and the historical questions of the country concerned. Funding is also an issue for the capacity of National Archives to digitise their collections and digitisation policy may in part be motivated by funding possibilities, both from public and private sources.

Documents in national archives often considered for digitisation, include:

- Symbolic or extremely rare or valuable items that are considered national or organisational treasures. Few in number and from any period, these have a particular importance to the organisation and there is often popular demand for access to them. The archive organisation will usually digitise these documents

---

<sup>10</sup> Archives could guarantee access to authentic material through the use of persistent identifiers that allow users to find original digital objects and their descriptive metadata.

<sup>11</sup> Licensing in this context can take two forms. The first covers public sector information that is made available for use and re-use by individuals and organisations where there is no element of endorsement by a public sector archive. The UK [Open Government License](#) is an example of this type of licensing. The second type of licensing activity covers those circumstances where an archive works with a partner on a particular project, e.g. a digitisation project carried out on behalf of the archive. In many cases the first type of licensing does not involve the payment of a fee. However, the second type of licensing activity often involves a commercial arrangement and a financial return to the archives.

itself and make them available on its own website. Examples include foundation treaties and papers of national heroes.

- Reference material consisting of central record groups that allow for a high level overview of the subject matter and could lead to further research in archives that may not be available online.
- Archives of interest to family historians. Popular interest in family history has created a market for online access. This concerns often extensive series covering a long period of time. Examples include civil registers of births, marriages and deaths, census records, wills and notary records, and court records. These are sometimes digitised by the archive organisation but are also of interest to the private sector and may be digitised in partnership with them and made available on the internet on a paying basis.
- Archives with particular visual appeal, which are immediately accessible to a non expert audience, for example maps and plans, drawings and photographs. They will generally be digitised by the archive organisation itself, though there may also be some private sector interest. Historic maps for example, may be a valuable addition to online current mapping while the private sector has also shown interest in historic drawings and photographs.

Commercial interest in archival information is at present largely focussed on the genealogical market. Working with private companies, as some national archives are doing, can be an effective means of exploiting this data and making it more widely accessible. At the same time there may be concerns about direct competition between the public and private sectors and about turning archival material into a commodity with a monetary value.

As a rule member States provide free access to their archives and in many this is stipulated by law. This does not however mean that all additional services provided in a digital environment must or should necessarily be available for free. Providing these digital services can be costly and cost recovery models may be necessary to be able to maintain and possibly expand them.

If the financial resources are the main problem, to what extent could the private sector provide those resources, for example through licensing arrangements? Making information available online is not a cost-free activity. This must be taken into account in setting policies at both institutional and national level.

It is generally recognised that no archive can digitise everything at once and that priorities will need to be decided. Parallel actions such as scanning on demand could therefore be part of the service provided by archives.<sup>12</sup> It is important to continue to gather information in this field, to learn about digitisation strategies in the member states and to support those countries that have not yet started to digitise their holdings.

---

<sup>12</sup> For example, archives may also allow researchers to use cameras to make digital images of the archives they consult.

## 2.5 Costs and funding

Digitising archival heritage is expensive. As the New Renaissance Report<sup>13</sup> points out, it is so expensive that funding the necessary activities in the field of digitisation and digital accessibility is an important issue on the agenda of national and European policymakers.<sup>14</sup> Digitisation is moreover incomplete unless it is accompanied by user friendly access to the digital reproductions.

An accurate estimate of the costs of bringing archives online must take into account three different cost items: preparing material and the technical production of digital reproductions and their metadata, the professional preparation for their online presentation and their storage and maintenance. The last of these represents a continuing and constantly increasing need for resources. In other words, digitisation requires ongoing investments.

Different archival institutions are already developing ways to reduce costs to an affordable level and some, as set out above, are seeking private sector partners to help fund digitisation projects and services. These experiences and concepts should be evaluated and common strategies and recommendations should be developed. Funding in excess of current budgets will be necessary, also with a view to the resources needed for preservation of the original and authentic material.

Finding adequate ways of funding digitisation is crucial to opening online access to Europe's archival heritage. Archival institutions therefore believe it is important to develop a shared European funding agenda in addition to a European digitisation programme. Important questions on that agenda are:

- Which funding models can be used for the digitisation of archival heritage?
- What is the role of direct or indirect public funding (grants, lotteries, tax benefits, employment programmes) and direct and indirect private funding (sponsoring, investments, cost recovery models, donations, and voluntary work)?
- How do these models relate to the principle of free access for citizens to Europe's cultural heritage and the preservation of authentic and reliable sources?
- Is it relevant to make a distinction in these funding models for the type of use? For example, simple consultation, re-use in educational or scientific projects, commercial re-use? Should charges for re-use be employed for digitisation?

### *Born Digital material*

The cost of appraising, selecting, transferring, preserving and making born-digital material accessible and understandable is of growing importance. This requires investment not only in technology but also in the archivists themselves, who need to develop new skills and expertise in order to deal with the challenges born-digital material presents. The preservation of born-digital material is an ongoing cost which cannot be avoided and must

---

<sup>13</sup> The New Renaissance. Report of the 'Comité des sages', Reflection Group on bringing Europe's cultural heritage online, Brussels 10 January 2011.

<sup>14</sup> See also the Commission Recommendation of 27 October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation, OJ L283 of 29.10.2011, pp. 39-45.

not be in competition with the financing of digitisation. The costs involved in providing online access to born-digital material, e.g. for de-identification in order to comply with data protection legislation, can be a serious obstacle to providing such access. Experiences in this field should be shared and common strategies should be developed.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The role of archives is changing because of their involvement in modern information society and the digital information chain. This is not just a technical issue but intricately linked to the involvement of archives in e-government. At the same time archives retain many of their traditional responsibilities as custodians, information providers and guarantors of authenticity.

Archives are relied upon to provide authentic and trustworthy sources for the retrospective accountability of administrations. In order to fulfil their responsibilities it is necessary that National Archives are involved in setting the rules for digital records management at the early stages of the document life-cycle. Archives should do more to be involved in governing the business processes of government, not just from a technological perspective but also by creating new visions about the archival institutions themselves and their connection to government.

Digital preservation and providing access to born-digital material are core responsibilities of National Archives. The transfer of increasing amounts of born-digital records increases the need to create a sustainable technical, organisational and knowledge infrastructure to keep digital material permanently accessible and ensure its reliability. This will require a notable effort from archives whereby sharing experiences and developing common strategies are essential ingredients.

The National Archives recognise the importance of ensuring that citizens across the EU have online access to the rich archival heritage in Europe. The Brussels Declaration on Digital Access to Archives in 2010<sup>15</sup> underlines their intention to make the fullest possible use of digital technologies to promote open access to Europe's archival holdings. It should be noted however that this poses specific qualitative requirements on the descriptive information and the ability of archives to guarantee the authenticity of digital records.

Archives in Europe are working together to face the challenges of the modern information society even as they strive to continue to fulfil their traditional responsibilities to governments and citizens. Archives already have a two decade long history of cooperation in Europe. They will continue to learn from each other and, wherever possible, cooperate to develop new standards, practices and solutions in order to take the next step to becoming a full partner in modern information society.

The National Archives will examine how they can work together more closely to meet the challenges ahead and create a new concept for the next years of cooperation. They will coordinate their efforts, between themselves and with the EU institutions, via the European Board of National Archivists and the European Archives Group. In addition, the National Archives will seek to engage more closely with other bodies involved in information management and e-government. The National Archives aim to be a full partner in EU policy development on open data and online access to information.

---

<sup>15</sup>

The Brussels Declaration was adopted by the European Board of National Archivists in Brussels on 19 November 2010.

## 4. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### DECISIONS

- (1) The National Archives will work together to create a **shared digital agenda** for archives which links European objectives with national ambitions and efforts. They will investigate how the archives can contribute to a sustainable Archive Portal Europe Foundation after 2015. The EAG will seek to promote a common policy for archives in the growing European information area and will examine how fundamental archival values can find their place in the new digital developments. Special attention will be given to interoperability, long term accessibility of data, persistent identifiers, open data and appraisal.
- (2) The National Archives will cooperate to **bring online by 2015**:
  - The main sources that help citizens to better understand relations between countries and administrations in the history and construction of Europe as well as the diversity of national cultures, traditions and identities.
  - The archival "showpieces" of each Member State.
  - Collections relating to major historical events and anniversaries.
- (3) The National Archives will cooperate more closely with other bodies in order to ensure that archival interests, such as preservation and access, are balanced with other interests, such as data protection. For example, they undertake to draft a Code of Conduct for archives in the framework of the proposal for an EU Data Protection Regulation that will be discussed with other interested parties.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (4) National Archives should be partners for governments in setting standards for the **management of electronic records**. They will continue to work together with other public and private sector organisations in the DLM Forum with a view to promoting the further development of guidelines and standards, such as MoReq2010.
- (5) Common standards for **online services** should be shared. The developing role of social networking and its potential influence on the provision of archival services needs to be examined.
- (6) Archives organisations should work collaboratively to overcome barriers and encourage greater **re-use of information from archives**. There is a need to develop a common model from existing best practice in Europe that can be used as a framework for archives which do not yet have a policy for re-use. The model should include how to license content for re-use and guarantee authenticity as well as options for charging or free access. Archives should share experiences with libraries and museums and conduct further research on what customers and potential customers are looking for. The EAG should promote best practices in this area and



act as the advocate for the sector, stressing that archives contain rich content with potential for re-use.

- (7) National Archives should share their knowledge and experience and exchange information about approaches to **digitisation** of archival material. The development of a Europe wide strategy, including models and common standards for digitisation, would assist individual archives to put digitisation programmes in train and contribute to greater interoperability between countries. It is also necessary to examine the funding of digitisation programmes. Should archives charge for additional services such as online access, and if so in which cases? The EAG should make recommendations on digitisation for online access and encourage the development of appropriate strategies.
- (8) The transfer and preservation of increasing amounts of **born-digital records** calls for intensified cooperation and exchange of best practices and solutions between National Archives. Where possible they should develop common concepts and solutions, taking account of existing projects in this field.<sup>16</sup> It is necessary to better quantify the funding required for born-digital archive material so that archives have a better grasp of how much it costs and how limited budgets need to be balanced between traditional and digital media. The cost of preserving born-digital records should be assessed with greater precision, e.g. through improved cost models, in order to provide the National Archives with better instruments to forecast the necessary funding over time.

---

<sup>16</sup> For example projects such as PLANETS, PRESTOSPACE and Digital Preservation Europe.