

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION**of 14 November 2005****on priority actions to increase cooperation in the field of archives in Europe**

(2005/835/EC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular the second indent of Article 151(5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) As a result of the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Culture meeting within the Council of 14 November 1991 on arrangements concerning archives ⁽¹⁾, and the Council Conclusions of 17 June 1994 concerning greater cooperation in the field of archives ⁽²⁾, initial progress has been made towards greater cooperation between the Member States in the field of archives.
- (2) The Council Resolution of 6 May 2003 on archives in the Member States ⁽³⁾ stressed the importance of archives for the understanding of the history and culture of Europe and for the democratic functioning of society within the framework of the enlargement of the Union on 1 May 2004.
- (3) Multidisciplinary forums have been held within a Community framework on the problems involved in the management, storage, preservation and retrieval of machine-readable data, with the participation of public administrations and national archives services, as well as representatives of industry and research.
- (4) The Council Resolution of 6 May 2003 stressed the need for further development of information and communications technologies applications and solutions in the field of archives.
- (5) The Commission highlights the work done by the institutions of the Union in the specific field of film archives in Europe, including the Council Resolution of 24 November 2003 ⁽⁴⁾ on the deposit of cinematographic works in the European Union and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities which will be adopted before the end of 2005.

- (6) In its Resolution of 6 May 2003 the Council also invited the Commission to submit a report on the current situation and future development of archives in the enlarged Union. The 'Report on archives in the enlarged European Union', which was drawn up by a group of experts from the Member States and adopted in February 2005 ⁽⁵⁾, is a sound basis for the further development of archives in Europe. It includes, at the Council's request, proposals for practical actions and guidelines with a view to increasing cooperation at European level in the field of archives,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

- A. A European Archives Group, comprising experts designated by the Member States and the institutions of the Union, should ensure cooperation and coordination on general matters relating to archives and follow-up of the work referred to in the 'Report on archives in the enlarged European Union' of February 2005, and in particular the priority measures referred to in point B of this Recommendation. Where and when appropriate, the European Archives Group should also cooperate with other relevant European networks such as the National Representatives Group on Digitisation and the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation (EBLIDA).
- B. The following measures in the field of archives:
 1. preservation of and prevention of damage to archives in Europe:
 - development of a model action plan by the European Archives Group to promote damage prevention measures for documents and archives in the context of natural catastrophes and other harmful incidents,
 - promotion by the European Archives Group of Community-wide actions for the preservation and restoration of damaged documents and archives,
 - establishment and promotion, by the national archives services of the Member States and the archives services of the institutions of the Union, of standards and specifications for the construction of new purpose built premises for archives;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 314, 5.12.1991, p. 2.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 235, 23.8.1994, p. 3.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 113, 13.5.2003, p. 2.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 295, 5.12.2003, p. 5.

⁽⁵⁾ COM(2005) 52 final.

2. reinforcement of European interdisciplinary cooperation on electronic documents and archives to be further developed, including within the framework of the Council Work Plan for Culture, in particular regarding the coordination of digitalisation ⁽¹⁾:
 - increase in cooperation on safeguarding the authenticity, long-term preservation and availability of electronic documents and archives, in particular by updating and extending the current requirements for setting up electronic document and archive management systems such as MoReq (Model requirements for electronic documents and archives management systems), which promote better public administration, and by continuing to organise DLM ⁽²⁾ forums on electronic documents and archives;
 3. establishment and maintenance of an Internet portal for documents and archives in Europe as a priority:
 - provision, through the national archives services of the Member States and the archives services of the institutions of the Union, of an Internet portal which would give easier and cross-border access to documents and archives of the Member States and institutions of the Union. That Internet portal could be hosted either on one of the European Union computer servers or by the national archives service of a Member State;
 4. promotion of best practice with regard to national and European law on the management of, and access to, documents and archives; the national archives services of the Member States and the archives services of the institutions of the Union should:
 - monitor new draft legislation in that field to be enacted in any of the Member States, with the aim of identifying best practices especially with regard to requirements for the management of and access to documents and archives,
 - link data on archival legislation and other related laws at national and Community level and facilitate consultation thereof by setting up a database in order to encourage dissemination of that legislation. That database could be hosted either on one of the European Union computer servers or by the national archives service of a Member State. It is advisable to
- take into account the work undertaken within the framework of the European legal data project, promoted by the European branch of the International Archives Council, EURBICA, as indicated in the 'Report on Archives in the enlarged European Union' (priority action 4.2);
5. adoption of measures to prevent the theft of archival documents:
 - development of an action plan and common guidelines by the national archives services of the Member States that will allow for the exchange of information and best practices in order to combat the theft of archival documents and to facilitate the recovery of stolen documents.
- C. The Member States and the institutions of the Union should jointly promote the implementation of the priority measures identified in the 'Report on archives in the enlarged European Union' of February 2005 and referred to in point B of this Recommendation. The implementation of priority measures will take account of the work of the groups set up within the framework of the EBNA (European Board of National Archivists), notably with respect to cooperation in the fields of security and conservation of archives and putting into place a European information access portal. The adoption of this Recommendation and the implementation of these measures do not in themselves imply a commitment of new budgetary resources by either the European Union or the Member States. Where possible and in accordance with the relevant procedures, the European Union will endeavour, under existing programmes, to support projects aimed at the implementation of those measures.
- D. At the latest three years after the date of publication of this Recommendation, the European Archives Group should present a progress report on implementation of the priority measures referred to in point B.

Done at Brussels, 14 November 2005.

For the Council
The President
T. JOWELL

⁽¹⁾ Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2005-2006 (doc. 13839/04).

⁽²⁾ DLM = Document lifecycle management.