

Declaration

Cooperation on advancing digitisation of cultural heritage

DIGITAL DAY 2019

In the Rome Declaration of March 2017, the leaders of 27 Member States and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission re-affirmed their commitment to a *Union that preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity*. Europe's rich cultural heritage and its dynamic cultural and creative sectors strengthen European identity, creating a sense of belonging.

Increasing threats to cultural heritage due to natural disasters, pollution, mass tourism, deterioration over time, terrorism and vandalism, create an urgent need to make the most of digital technologies to record, document and preserve Europe's cultural heritage and foster their accessibility to European citizens. At the same time, high quality, interoperable and open access to digital cultural heritage assets are essential to create higher digital engagement for audiences and foster spill-overs in sectors such as tourism, education, creative industries and the tech scene.

Emerging technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence and extended reality offer numerous possibilities to further process and use digital cultural heritage. 3D technologies are especially promising, providing new ways of advancing scientific understanding, handling and restoring damaged or fragile heritage and ensuring digital preservation that reflects the uniqueness and multidimensionality of our heritage. 3D is also one of the foundations for interactive technologies such as virtual and augmented reality for cultural applications.

The Union needs to collaborate to advance 3D digitisation of our cultural heritage. European research institutes and start-ups have developed world-leading expertise and are pioneering technologies in these fields, and can contribute to advancing the digital transformation of the cultural heritage institutions. The Union also needs to ensure that its digitised cultural content and related applications are available, where appropriate, on European platforms, in line with our values.

Over the past decade, Member States have invested in digitisation and digital preservation of cultural heritage and have provided access to digitised resources for research, use and re-use.

The Commission Recommendation on digitisation and online accessibility and digital preservation of cultural material (2011/711/EU) has helped Member States to develop strategies and improve conditions for the entire digitisation lifecycle. Europeana, Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, embodies the continuous effort of the European Commission and the Member States to democratise access to cultural heritage, foster pan-European collaboration between heritage institutions, and promote interoperability and open access, while respecting copyright. The New European Agenda for Culture (COM(2018)267) highlights a Digital4Culture strategy while the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and its subsequent European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (SWD(2018)491) promote solutions that make cultural heritage accessible to all, including via digital means. The Directive on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market (approved by the Parliament and to be formally adopted by the Council shortly) will facilitate the digitisation of collections held by cultural heritage institutions for preservation purposes and will enable the online and cross-border availability of out-of-commerce works. The Public Sector Information Directive fosters re-use

of cultural data by citizens and companies while taking into account the requirements related to digitisation of our cultural heritage, as well as the specificity of cultural institutions.

Member States have been exchanging best practices in this area through the Expert Group on Digital Cultural Heritage and Europeana (DCHE) and the Open Method of Coordination in the field of culture. The European Commission has also been funding research, innovation and deployment to support Member States in this endeavour. The next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 will also offer unprecedented opportunities through Digital Europe, Creative Europe and Horizon Europe programmes to further build and strengthen digital capacities of cultural heritage organisations as well as cross-sectorial collaborations, notably on digital skills and emerging technologies.

In the spirit of the Rome Declaration, and the momentum created by the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, the signatories of this Declaration **agree to step up efforts and pursue progress, together**, under three main pillars:

I. A pan-European initiative for 3D digitisation of cultural heritage artefacts, monuments and sites:

- Jointly elaborating *a common standard*, methodologies and guidelines to model data and knowledge aiming at a comprehensive, holistic documentation of *European 3D cultural heritage assets* (in the framework of the European Commission's relevant expert groups such as the DCHE and in Research and Innovation projects).
- Defining the appropriate framework conditions for an *open European repository for storing, managing and re-using interoperable 3D models* (in the framework of the European Commission's relevant expert groups such as the DCHE and in deployment projects).
- Exchanging *best practices on developing expertise and skills for 3D digitisation*, in cultural heritage organisations, and on technical, legal, and online publishing requirements for 3D (through the various platforms supported by the European Commission, such as the DCHE Expert Group).

II. Re-use of digitised cultural resources to foster citizen engagement, innovative use and spill-overs in other sectors:

- Mobilising *national and regional networks and the "StartUp Europe" initiative* to bring advanced technologies, such as *big data, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, augmented-virtual-mixed reality and 5G* to enable innovative use of digitised cultural resources, knowledge extraction and more engaging experience of heritage content.
- Further developing and promoting *interoperability standards* and frameworks in digitisation initiatives, such as those developed and supported by Europeana for sharing content and metadata online.

III. Enhancing cross-sector, cross-border cooperation and capacity building in the sector of digitised cultural heritage:

- Encouraging audiovisual media services providers to contribute to the *Directory of European Films* supported by Creative Europe, for the purpose of increasing transparency of the Video on Demand (VoD) market, making European films more present and visible online and facilitating data sharing and research.
- Creating and fostering *partnerships between culture and tourism ministries* and organisations, to explore synergies and promote digitised heritage to attract more online and on-site visitors in a sustainable manner.
- Supporting the *capacity of heritage professionals* to manage the digital shift by acquiring and developing digital skills and knowledge.

The signatories of this Declaration invite all Member States, EFTA and EEA countries to sign it.

**For the Royaume de Belgique /
Koninkrijk België**

Séverine WATERBLEY
Director-General, Ministry of the
Economy

For the Česká republika

Petr OČKO
Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade

For the Eesti Vabariik

Clyde KULL
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent
Representative

For Éire/Ireland

Seán CANNEY
Minister of State for Natural Resources,
Community Affairs and Digital
Development

For the Reino de España

Juan DE ARÍSTEGUI LABORDE
Deputy Permanent Representative

For the République française

Fabrice DUBREUIL
Deputy Permanent Representative

For the Repubblica italiana

Gianluca VACCA
State Secretary, Ministry of Cultural
Heritage and Activities

For the Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία

Vassiliki ANASTASSIADOU
Minister for Transport, Communications
and Works

For the Latvijas Republika

Artūrs Toms PLEŠS
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Environmental Protection and Regional
Development

For the Lietuvos Respublika

Jekaterina ROJAKA
Vice-Minister for the Economy and
Innovation

For the Grand-Duché de Luxembourg

Patrick ENGELBERG
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary, Representative to the
Political and Security Committee

For the Magyarország

Anikó JUHÁSZ
Deputy State Secretary for Agricultural
Economy

For the Repubblika ta' Malta

Lorenzo VELLA
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent
Representative

For the Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

Mona KEIJZER
State Secretary for Economic Affairs and
Climate Policy

For the Rzeczpospolita Polska

Marek ZAGÓRSKI
Minister for Digital Affairs

For the República Portuguesa

João TORRES
State Secretary for Consumer Protection

For România

Alexandru PETRESCU
Minister for Communications and
Information Society

For the Republika Slovenija

Aleksandra PIVEC
Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and
Food

For the Slovenská republika

Miloš KOTEREC
Diplomatic Advisor to the Deputy Prime
Minister

**For the Suomen tasavalta/
Republiken Finland**

Mikael NYBERG
High-Level Representative for Transport
and Communications Policy

For the Konungariket Sverige

**For the United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland**

Mikael SCHULZ
Counsellor, Permanent Representation of
Sweden to the European Union

Katrina WILLIAMS
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent
Representative

For the Kongeriket Norge

Rolf Einar FIFE
Ambassador to the EU

Done in Brussels on 9 April 2019 in one original in the English language.

DIGITAL DAY 2019