



Europeana on-line library should be enlarged, but still respect copyright, say MEPs

The EU's Europeana on-line library, museum and archive needs content from more Member States now and EU budget funding from 2013, says the Culture and Education Committee in a report unanimously approved on Monday. Whilst intellectual property rights must be respected, digitisation should not restrict access to Europe's public heritage, warn MEPs.

The *Europeana* project, operational from November 2008, aims to make Europe's cultural and scientific heritage accessible to all on the internet. At the end of last year it offered 4.6 million digitised works, including books, maps, film clips and photographs. MEPs back the aim of raising this to 10 million objects by June 2010 and 15 million by 2015. In 2011 *Europeana.eu* will be more multilingual and include semantic web features. The site is run by the *Europeana* office, hosted by the Dutch National Library.

Content: more contributions needed

Although more than 1,000 cultural institutions already contribute content to *Europeana*, some Member States contribute much more than others. Only 5% of all digital books are available in *Europeana*. Almost half (47%) of these come from France; other big contributors are Germany (16%), the Netherlands (8%), and the UK, (8%). For legal reasons, *Europeana* includes neither out-of-print books (90% of the content of national libraries), nor orphan works, whose authors cannot be identified (10 to 20% of national collections).

While welcoming the opening and development of *Europeana*, MEPs deeply regret the unevenness of Member State contributions. They urge governments and cultural institutions to co-operate closely in speeding up digitisation, and "not to restrict availability to the territory of their country". They also urge them to provide more audio and video material, "paying special attention to those works which deteriorate easily". MEPs propose a funding and advertising campaign entitled "Join *Europeana*".

The report urges the Commission and Member States "to take all necessary steps to avoid a knowledge gap between Europe and non-EU countries", so as to make *Europeana* "one of the main reference points for education and research purposes". The committee also recommends creating a separate on-line space, within *Europeana*, where users can create content.

MEPs stress that "the portal should take into account the needs of disabled people". They are also "convinced that public domain content in the analogue world should remain in the public domain in the digital environment, even after the format shift".

Copyright and charges

Europeana should "respect intellectual property rights, especially performers' rights", stress MEPs, who also underline the need to protect the integrity of authors' work and avoid changes to it or censorship. The committee wants *Europeana* to be able to offer in-copyright as well as out-of-print and orphan works, e.g. through extended collective licensing or other

Press release

collective management practices. The committee "endorses the Commission's intention to establish a simple and cost-efficient rights clearance system", working in close co-operation with all the stakeholders involved.

On the other hand, digitisation should not of itself bring about any new copyright, nor result in privatising or restricting access to Europe's public heritage. The dissemination of knowledge on the internet "should not be left to commercial firms", they warn.

MEPs call on the Commission to introduce a legislative proposal on the digitisation, preservation and dissemination of orphan works, so as to end uncertainty as to the law, and to develop a European data base of these works.

Funding

Europeana is funded by the eContentplus programme, by the Competitiveness and Innovation programme, and by some Member States and cultural institutions. While encouraging public-private partnerships and the creation of a sustainable financing and governance model for the project in the long term, they also underline that a substantial share of the cost of digitisation should be covered in a specific budget line of the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework after 2013.

This own-initiative report should be put to a plenary vote in April (tbc).

Contact :

Robertas POGORELIS

CULT

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32006

STR: (+33) 3 881 74642

PORT: (+32) 498 98 33 31

EMAIL: cult-press@europarl.europa.eu