European Commission report on Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation



The Consolidated Progress Report reviews and assesses the overall actions and progress made by Member States in the European Union in implementing the Recommendation (2011/711/EU) which is one of the main EU policy instruments on digitisation, online access and digital preservation of cultural heritage material.
It is based on the Member States specific reports submitted
through the DCHE (Expert Group on Digital Cultural Heritage and Europeana).



In the report some important themes emerge:
- use of 3D technology for digitisation of cultural heritage artefacts, monuments and sites,
- initiatives to enhance digital capacity in the cultural heritage sector.
Some examples of good practice during the 2015-2017 are also presented.

The recent fire at Notre Dame that broke out on 15 April 2019 proves that immovable cultural heritage, an important part of Europe's cultural resources, is particularly vulnerable to threats difficult to predict or prevent. In this contest, the report shows a new important trend: the Member States are increasingly working to make the most of digital technologies and reporting funding programmes for digitisation of immovable cultural heritage, some of which reported 3D digitisation in particular.

The report shows how Member States plan, organise and monitor digitisation strategies and funding across all areas of cultural heritage from library and museum archives to historical buildings.
Moreover, about the Online Accessibility of Public Domain Material, it reveals that most States promote preserving public domain status of cultural heritage after digitisation.

The largest chapter deals with the support given by the states for the development of Europeana, the European cultural platform providing access to a wide array of digital content from Europe's libraries, archives and museums.
The data collected by Europeana confirm that quantitative targets have already been widely achieved while it is necessary to focus on quality management.
In order to promote high-quality content in Europeana, the EU funded aggregation projects have begun to include quality criteria.

The chapter "Digital Preservation" reveals that the majority of Member States has implemented a variety of action plans, strategies and initiatives for the long-term preservation of digital material: action points at the national level, activities of public institutions, competence centres or associations taking action in this area; three Member States reported participation in European projects dedicated to digital preservation.

The Recommendation is recognised by the Member States as a very important instrument for setting up national policies, coordinating activities, keeping up with progress and to give new impetus to existing policies.
However, the Member States suggest a reinforcement and update of some themes to keep up with the overall regulatory, political and technological developments, as well as to review low impact provisions.

Further information: the report on Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation