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on i2010: towards a European digital library
(2006/2040(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on i2010: towards a European digital library
(2006/2040(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled: ‘i2010: digital libraries’ (COM(2005)0465),
 - having regard to Commission Recommendation 2006/586/EC of 24 August 2006 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation¹,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation²,
 - having regard to Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society³,
 - having regard to the report of 18 April 2007 by the High-Level Expert Group (copyright subgroup) on digital preservation, orphan works and out-of-print works,
 - having regard to the Commission communication entitled: ‘scientific information in the digital age: access, dissemination and preservation’ (COM(2007)0056),
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report by the Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0296/2007),
- A. whereas through the meeting, exchanging and sharing that culture entails, it can help to bring the European Union into closer contact with its citizens and a true European identity to take root and find expression,
- B. whereas the wealth and diversity of the European cultural heritage ought to be promoted, safeguarded and disseminated as widely as possible,
- C. whereas the Member States and cultural institutions, particularly libraries, have a key role to play in this endeavour both at national level and at regional and local level,
- D. whereas account must be taken of the rapid development of new technologies and the resulting changes in cultural practices,
- E. whereas for a large number of people, particularly young people, the Internet has become one of the principal means of access to knowledge and learning,

¹ OJ L236, 31.8.2006, p.28

² OJ C297, 7.12.2006, p.1

³ OJ L 167, 22.6.2001, p.10

- F. whereas in this digital environment it is essential to guarantee access for all to the European cultural heritage and to ensure that it is preserved for the generations to come and that it form part of our collective memory,
- G. whereas large-scale digitisation and online access to the European cultural heritage is one of the main ways to achieve this,
- H. whereas access to the European cultural heritage reflects the diversity of Europe, and access to this heritage must therefore be multilingual,
- I. whereas coherent policies on digitisation and preservation of digital works must be put in place to prevent the irrecoverable loss of cultural content while ensuring strict respect for copyright and related rights,
- J. whereas, apart from its intrinsic cultural qualities, digitisation of the European cultural heritage will also benefit other sectors, particularly education, science, research, tourism and the media,
- K. whereas mass digitisation of cultural content does not aim to replace or compete with traditional cultural content, but to produce reliable, good-quality, parallel digital versions of such content,
- L. whereas digital technology is also a remarkable tool for disabled people, enabling them to adapt content to their needs,
- M. whereas, however, only a minute part of the European cultural heritage has so far been digitised, and the Member States are progressing at very different speeds,
- N. whereas the public funding allocated to mass digitisation is insufficient for a project of this scale,
- O. whereas digitisation initiatives are very fragmented and most of the experience already acquired at Community level is still misunderstood and does not provide simple, direct and multilingual access to all the works comprising the European cultural heritage,
- P. whereas a 'general public' tool must be put in place to ensure universal and immediate access to the European cultural heritage with no need to travel, and to help speed up digitisation,
- Q. whereas existing European initiatives which will contribute to the initial development of the European digital library such as TEL, the European Library, which already provides access to the documents in European national library collections, and in particular enables searches to be undertaken through the digital or bibliographical resources of twenty-three of the forty-seven national libraries, the TEL-ME-MOR projects which contribute to the integration of the ten national libraries of the new Member States, the EDL project which seeks to integrate nine other national libraries in the EU/EFTA, and Europeana which brings together the national libraries of France, Hungary and Portugal, should be used as a basis,

The European digital library, the face of a Europe that is unified in diversity

1. Recommends setting up in stages a European digital library in the form of a single, direct and multilingual access point to the European cultural heritage;
2. Stresses that, although the long-term aim is to establish a tool that covers all categories of cultural material, such as audiovisual content, the European digital library must initially concentrate on the potential offered by text material that is free of copyright;
3. To this end invites all European libraries to make available to the European digital library the works that are free of copyright which they already hold in digital form;
4. Calls on European universities and other higher education institutions to open up access to doctoral theses and other scientific works whose subject matter and fields of study relate to the European cultural heritage, under conditions to be laid down and without in any way infringing copyright;
5. Invites other European cultural institutions, including regional and local institutions, to take part in this project so that it will be representative of the wealth and diversity of European culture; encourages museums to digitise their archives so that they can be included in this project;
6. Stresses that the European digital library does not aim to disseminate content exclusively, but to coordinate access to digital works;
7. Urges that common standards based on existing formats are chosen and used and adapted to ensure interoperability of content, which is necessary if the European digital library is to function properly, and that fixed metadata languages (Dublin Core etc.) be phased in;
8. Encourages the Member States to continue their efforts and speed up the rate of digitisation of cultural content to achieve a sufficient mass of content;
9. Encourages the Member States, together with cultural institutions to this end, to draw up digitisation plans at national or regional level, establishing a European map of all digitisation activities, thus enabling synergies to operate while avoiding duplication of the efforts and costs undertaken by many public and private institutions to digitise their holdings; since it is essential to draw up a survey of the work already carried out, broken down by type of institution;
10. Encourages close cooperation between the Member States and cultural institutions, and an exchange of good practice with regard to digitising works, making them accessible and digitally preserving them;
11. Stresses, given that the project cannot be translated into reality without a substantial research and development component, that the European digital library will encourage research in the areas of digitisation, interoperability and digital preservation, particularly through skills centres set up by the Commission;
12. Stresses the need to support innovation and research in the field of multilingualism;

13. Points out that, although Community programmes are not able to fund digitisation as such, new methods of financing must be developed, including partnership with the private sector, on the understanding, however, that every effort must be made to prevent digitisation proceeding at different paces in the Member States;

Structure and content of the European digital library – a common, multilingual access point to the European cultural heritage

14. Encourages the setting-up of a common interface providing access to content of guaranteed quality and accuracy via an integrated search engine, which constitutes, a tool with which to search for meta-information and for direct text searching when documents have been digitised in text mode;
15. Underlines the importance of achieving a multilingual interface giving direct access to content that is sought in all European Union languages, essentially in order to accommodate not just ordinary searching by author or title, but also searches by topic or keyword, the results of which must ultimately encompass the data from every library involved, in every catalogue language;
16. Urges also putting in place innovative, modern features that are suitable for all visitors;
17. Emphasises that the European digital library must be planned and organised on the basis of a pool of resources and technical capabilities able to facilitate creation, research and the utilisation of information and should not consist merely in a digital catalogue of European works;
18. Points out that it would be desirable not to limit the European cultural heritage to all the European Union's own works, but also to take account of the cultural contribution of other European countries;
19. Points out that, although the European cultural heritage is largely made up of works in the public domain, it is not limited to this category alone;
20. Points out therefore that a distinction must be drawn between works in the public domain and copyright works, including orphan and out-of-print works, and to provide different models for each kind of work, suited to each sector;
21. Welcomes the establishment of the high-level expert group and in particular supports its proposals to list all orphan and out-of-print works and to develop mechanisms to facilitate the search for copyright holders;
22. Stresses that the proposals formulated by the high-level group of experts in its first report primarily concern the book publishing sector, and that a decision on whether to extend them to other sectors should be taken in conjunction with their representatives;
23. Points out that it would be desirable at a later stage for the European digital library to offer, if possible, copyright as well as out-of-copyright documents, while strictly complying with national, Community and international law on intellectual property;

24. Underlines that any decision of this sort must be taken in cooperation with all the players involved, particularly authors, publishers and booksellers;
25. Proposes that in the European digital library, users should be able to find any kind of digital documents, in image and text mode, and consult them freely, in their entirety for out-of-copyright works or in the form of short extracts for copyright works, with the agreement of the copyright holders;
26. Proposes that provision be made for the on-line browsing of copyright-protected works through specialised websites providing the security guarantees required by rightholders;
27. Proposes in this latter case that the European digital library acts as a simple conveyor of information;
28. Points out that specialised sites could provide access to the whole of a copyright document in agreement with the copyright holders and in return for fair remuneration;

Management and monitoring

29. Calls for a steering committee to be set up in which cultural institutions would play a major role, and which would determine the priorities for and the guidelines of the European digital library, while ensuring the coordination, management and monitoring of its activities;
30. Calls for coordination between the groups established by the Commission, in particular the Member States' expert group on digitisation and digital preservation and the above-mentioned high-level expert group, in order to achieve genuine synergy at European level;
31. Suggests that a Europe-wide coordinating body, equivalent to TEL, be set up for the collections of museums and national archives called upon to handle every kind of digitised material connected with the European cultural heritage, the ultimate goal being integration into the European digital library search system;
32. Points out that, if integrated coherently into education systems, the European digital library would make it easier to reach young Europeans and could bring them into closer contact with their cultural and literary heritage, while familiarising them with the new technologies and combating the digital divide;
33. Considers it essential to intensify the exchange of experience and good practice with other European institutions, such as the European Commission on Preservation and Access, institutions in non-member countries, such as the Library of Congress, international associations, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, public or private organisations, such as the Online Computer Library Center, and others, endeavouring wherever possible to use software and solutions already tested and in operation;
34. Urges that the European digital library be promoted and made visible and accessible through extensive communication at all levels and through the creation of an identifying logo;

35. Recommends in this connection that part of the resources earmarked for the European digital library be devoted to promoting this library among the broadest possible public;
36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The idea of a European digital library originated from six EU heads of state and government, who wanted to allow universal access to the European cultural heritage and to preserve it.

The Commission welcomed this idea and contributed to it through its beacon initiative 'i2010: digital libraries'. The first part of this initiative, the communication of 30 September 2005, analyses the main technical, legal, organisational and financial challenges in connection with this project.

An online public consultation on digitisation, access and digital preservation was also launched, and a high-level expert group was set up to resolve some of the problems raised.

In its recommendation of 24 August 2006, the Commission calls on the Member States to coordinate their efforts to achieve synergy at European level. It suggests establishing a European digital library in the form of a common, multilingual access point to the European cultural heritage.

On 13 November 2006 the Council adopted these recommendations unanimously.

It is now up to the European Parliament to send a strong signal so that this project can become a reality.

Thus, while working on the conceptual and technical organisation of all categories of cultural material, we must proceed in stages and concentrate initially on the potential provided by out-of-copyright text material.

PROCEDURE

Title	i2010: towards a European digital library				
Procedure number	2006/2040(INI)				
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	CULT 16.2.2006				
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary					
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision					
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary					
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Marie-Hélène Descamps 23.11.2005				
Previous rapporteur(s)					
Discussed in committee	20.3.2006	25.4.2006	22.3.2007	7.5.2007	25.6.2007
Date adopted	16.7.2007				
Result of final vote	+ 20 - 1 0 0				
Members present for the final vote	Guy Bono, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Ovidiu Victor Gant, Vasco Graça Moura, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Sándor Kónya-Hamar, Manolis Mavrommatis, Doris Pack, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Christa Prets, Pál Schmitt, Nikolaos Sifunakis, Henri Weber, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal				
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Amalia Sartori, Tadeusz Zwiefka				
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote					
Date tabled	23.7.2007				
Comments (available in one language only)	...				