

Brussels, 28 August 2009

Europe's Digital Library doubles in size but also shows EU's lack of common web copyright solution

4.6 million digitised books, maps, photographs, film clips and newspapers can now be accessed by internet users on Europeana, Europe's multilingual digital library (www.europeana.eu). The collection of Europeana has more than doubled since it was launched in November 2008 (IP/08/1747). Today the European Commission, in a policy document declared as its target to bring the number of digitised objects to 10 million by 2010. The Commission also opened a public debate on the future challenges for book digitisation in Europe: the potential of the public and private sector to team up and the need to reform Europe's too fragmented copyright framework.

"The digitisation of books is a Herculean task but also opens up cultural content to millions of citizens in Europe and beyond. This is why I welcome first efforts made by Member States and their cultural institutions to fill the shelves of Europe's digital library," said Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Society and Media. *"However, I find it alarming that only 5% of all digitised books in the EU are available on Europeana. I also note that almost half of Europeana's digitised works have come from one country alone, while all other Member States continue to under-perform dramatically. To me this shows, above all, that Member States must stop envying progress made in other continents and finally do their own homework. It also shows that Europeana alone will not suffice to put Europe on the digital map of the world. We need to work better together to make Europe's copyright framework fit for the digital age."*

Today a user can find 4.6 million digitised objects on Europeana, compared to 2 million nine months ago. New items that have been added include: a collection of 70 incunabula (books printed with the earliest printing techniques) from the library of Catalonia, a 1572 edition of 'Os Lusíadas' by Luís de Camoões, the national poem of Portugal, and footage of the Friedrichstraße in Berlin from 1913, from the Association des Cinémathèques Européennes.

However, the substantial progress made with Europeana also brings to the surface the challenges and problems linked to the digitisation process. At the moment, Europeana includes mainly digitised books which are in the public domain and are thus no longer protected by copyright law (which extends to 70 years after the death of the author).

For the moment, Europeana includes, for legal reasons, neither out-of print works (some 90% of the books in Europe's national libraries), nor orphan works (estimated at 10 – 20% of in-copyright collections) which are still in copyright but where the author cannot be identified.

Europeana also shows that licensing of copyright-protected material in Europe still takes place under a very fragmented legal framework. Earlier this year a French aggregator had to withdraw photographs from Europeana, since it only had the right to disseminate the material on French territory.

To address all these issues, the Commission launched today a **public consultation** on the future of Europeana and the digitisation of books that will run until **15 November 2009**. Questions the Commission asks include: How can it be ensured that digitised material can be made available to consumers EU-wide? Should there be better cooperation with publishers with regard to in-copyright material? Would it be a good idea to create European registries for orphan and out-of print works? How should Europeana be financed in the long term?

Background

Europeana was set up by the European Commission in November 2008 ([IP/08/1747](#)). From 2009-2011, the EU's [eContentplus](#) programme will cover about 80% of Europeana's budget (€ 2.5 million per year). The Member States and cultural institutions will contribute the rest. Until 2013 the European Commission can continue supporting Europeana with € 9 million through its [Competitiveness and Innovation Programme](#). The office of Europeana is hosted by the National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague and is run by the European Digital Library Foundation.

At its launch in November 2008, the Europeana website was so popular that the site initially went down ([MEMO/08/733](#)). Today it runs smoothly.

A press pack on Europeana is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=5181

Europeana – Europe's digital library: <http://www.europeana.eu/>

Digital libraries initiative of the European Union:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/index_en.htm

Annex

Overview of the contribution of EU Member States to Europeana
in % of the total number of objects (4.6 million)
– situation end July 2009 –

EU countries	
France	47%
Germany	15.4%
Netherlands	8%
United Kingdom	7.9%
Sweden	5.2%
Finland	4%
Greece	1.6%
Italy	1.2%
Belgium	1.1%
Slovenia	0.7%
Spain	0.6%
Estonia	0.4%
Luxembourg	0.4%
Poland	0.3%
Romania	0.3%
Austria	0.2%
Portugal	0.2%
Hungary	0.1%
Latvia	<0.1%
Cyprus	<0.1%
Bulgaria	<0.1%
Czech Republic	<0.1%
Denmark	<0.1%
Ireland	<0.1%
Lithuania	<0.1%
Malta	<0.1%
Slovakia	<0.1%
Non EU countries	
Norway	4.3%
Switzerland	0.4%

