The impact of Europeana

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1. Europeana acting as *pars pro toto* for the European digitisation policy

The history of Europeana goes back to 2005, the year in which some European heads of state asked the European Commission to open up European cultural heritage to all citizens through the creation of a virtual European library.

In 2007 the Europeana Foundation was established, followed by the launch of the www.europeana.eu website and the renaming of the European Digital Library to Europeana the year after. 2011 saw the European Commission issue a recommendation "on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation".

The European member states were also involved in this initiative. Thus the Member States Expert Group on Digitisation and Digital Preservation (MSEG) was established in 2007, made up of representatives of the ministries and/or cultural institutions of the EU member states. The objective of MSEG is twofold. Next to monitoring the above recommendation, the expert group also aims at exchanging information and sharing good practices on strategies and policies adopted by the member states in the field of digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation.

The overall MSEG also steers an MSEG Working Group on Digitisation Statistics, which is involved in the Enumerate survey specifically. Enumerate[1] , which is a European project building on the former NUMERIC project, aims at developing a benchmarking standard which can subsequently be adopted by EuroStat, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, the statistical offices of the member states and sectoral monitoring systems for example for measuring the progress in the digitisation of cultural heritage in a sustainable way.
Still, a European network such as Europeana cannot exert enough leverage to enforce this and can only try to convince the European Commission and other policy-makers. Enumerate, in which FARO, the Flemish interface centre for cultural heritage participates as a project partner, in any case goes to great lengths to inform these actors well, despite the very limited clout and resources of this project and the "account wariness" of the sectoral actors. Since Flemish statistics on cultural heritage use some of the NUMERIC/Enumerate basic indicators, the Flemish figures can be compared with their European counterparts. There is still a long way to go, however, before sound and relevant measuring instruments will be developed.

The MSEG convenes twice a year and reports on the progress in the member states every other year. These meetings aim at raising awareness for participation in Europeana, next to broaching the underlying strategy and important European policy decisions. Guidelines on the revision of the public sector information directive, orphan works, out-of-print works and financing mechanisms such as the calls within the CIP-ICT PSP framework are also on the agenda. The platform is moreover used to ask the member states for financial contributions to fill the *funding gap*.

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[1] More information can be found at : www.enumerate.eu, http://enumeratedataplatform.digibis.com

'Europeana' acts as a *pars pro toto* in this context, as a kind of collective name for the actions which the European Commission would like to achieve with regard to digitisation. 'Europeana' in this sense holds the middle between innovation and culture. The content, which is delivered by content providers and aggregators, is owned by cultural organisations, while digitisation, accessibility and re-use are mainly dealt with from the European agenda for innovation. It is no coincidence that its financial steering lies with the directorate-general *Information Society and Media*, which, as the name suggests, is targeted at the information society and hence the role of the cultural institutions therein. Europeana in this respect also largely contributes to the realisation of the Digital Agenda for Europe, with specific attention for economic revival and the prompt adoption of digital technologies by citizens and enterprises. The Digital Agenda is a priority action of the Europe 2020 strategy with a view to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Europeana hopes to be structurally supported on the basis of the Connecting Europe Facility, which focuses on the creation of infrastructure for new public digital services from 2014 onwards.

2.   Europeana acting as an intermediary and therefore caught between several fires?

The above proves that Europeana is first and foremost dependent on financing by the European Commission and the attainment of the objectives which this entails.

Let's first enlarge on the terminological distinction between the Europeana office and the Europeana ecosystem. The Europeana office operates from Den Haag (NL) and employs some fifty persons whereas the Europeana ecosystem refers to the wide context comprising all relevant European projects and all organisations and parties which are in one way or other interested or involved in Europeana. The Europeana Network was set up to reflect the diversity of the Europeana ecosystem.
In the contacts with the European Commission, the Europeana office is the central actor, but since it is part of a wider network, it has to provide a platform for all these approaches, which isn't evident. The question is whether Europeana succeeds in defining its objectives in sufficiently general terms so that each actor in the ecosystem feels represented. The Europeana Network made a valuable attempt at defining the following objective: "*The Europeana Network is united by a common cultural mission to work together to improve access to Europe's cultural heritage in balanced and sustainable ways*."

The present paper examines the extent to which this objective has been successful in putting theory into practice and the role which Europeana has played in this so far. The members of the 'Europeana Vlaanderen Overlegplatform' (Europeana Flanders consultation platform) have been surveyed with a view to gathering information on this. This informal platform was established in 2007 in order to facilitate and streamline the reaction of Flanders on this European initiative. This has until now been achieved through communication on the European policy and the projects involved, awareness raising about participation in Europeana and interaction with Europea.

The questionnaire was established on the basis of input from the 'Europeana Vlaanderen Overlegplatform' and subsequently distributed among the members. Twenty responses were received. The following text quotes some organisations by name, but the list is by no means complete, since some respondents chose to rename anonymous. The answers were drawn from experiences with the following projects : ATHENA, Daguerreobase, Digitising Contemporary Art, Enumerate, Europeana Awareness, Europeana Fashion, Europeana

Inside, Europeana Libraries, EuropeanaLocal, EUScreen, EUScreenXL, Linked Heritage and Partage Plus.

3. How is Europeana perceived in the Flemish cultural landscape?

3.1. Involvement in the various dimensions of an expanding ecosystem

This part covers two dimensions. It firstly depicts the project-based context in which the project partner works for the duration of the project and in which a work relationship with the Europeana office is established. Secondly, the Europeana ecosystem, which is the vast community containing all projects and structures, will be discussed.

As a project partner in Europeana related projects

The European digitisation policy is put into practice through European projects which have until now been financed on the basis of the Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme, ICT Policy Support Programme (CIP- ICT PSP). The European Commission adjusts the content focus of this programme on a yearly basis and thus responds to requests which it would like to satisfy, from a widely supported European project consortium.

The majority of the respondents actively participated or are participating in European projects as project partners.[2] They contribute content or act as technical partners within these projects, which are micro-environments within which a lot can be achieved. As a rule, the Europeana office itself is also involved as a partner in these projects. More often than not, this involvement is a reserved involvement, although exceptions exist. This can possibly be explained by the fact that a lot of work would be expected of Europeana itself, that they would have to change their method of working or out of fear for criticism. It is also possible that the persons who are delegated to project meetings as liaison officers, don't consider themselves as effective participants who have to facilitate cooperation and exchange, but as mere observers and rapporteurs. Still, for most respondents, the Europeana dimension is hardly visible outside the own project.

Through participation in such projects, the partner organisations get a wider view of the heritage sector on the basis of contacts with European colleagues and problems, such as the lack of money or critical mass are put into perspective. Still, the feeling persists that other project partners are intent on putting forth their own agenda or are participating for subsidisation reasons mainly. They usually wait until the project management tells them what to do and contribute little to the project for the rest. However, participation only makes sense if there is active and unrestrained cooperation. Europeana and its related projects are cooperations in which each partner is not only to share data, but experiences as well. This calls for some effort, which is counterbalanced by subsidisation.

The respondents also indicate that the interaction between the project and Europeana is not always flawless as far as data updates are concerned. When errors pertaining to the publication of data are reported, e.g., one is often not informed about the duration it will take to solve them. At the technical level too, the relationship between the project and Europeana may be restrictive. To give an example: the technical efforts which are made

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[2] A lot of Flemish and federal partners are involved in these projects. Cfr the accounts of the 'Europeana Vlaanderen Overlegplatform' on http://europeanavlaanderen.wikispaces.com/activiteiten for an overview.

within the project are not optimally validated if Europeana is not ready for it at the technical level. The implementation of the Europeana Data model (EDM) gave rise to such a situation.

<u>As a stakeholder in the Europeana ecosystem</u>

On the EuropeanaPro website we find the following definition of the Europeana Network: "The Europeana Network is an open forum for experts across Europe, from content providers and aggregators to providers of technical, legal and strategic knowledge and the creative industries. This forum represents and reflects the diversity of Europeana and gives its members an opportunity to voice their views. "[3] In order to better represent the distinct approaches, the former Council of Content Providers and Aggregators (CCPA) was extended to the Europeana Network

Six of the officers of the Europeana Network are members of the Europeana Foundation, which acts as its board of directors, and express the voice of the broad network.
The Europeana Network has the possibility to create Task Forces with a view to promoting the sharing of knowledge within the network and encouraging stakeholders to search for solutions to concrete problems.

Despite this laudable principle, the Europeana Network can't as yet be considered as an association of stakeholders. The respondents all stress the unilateral relationship between the Europeana office and the Europeana Network. The Europeana Network is mainly used to communicate information on the functioning of the Europeana Office by means of accounts, annual reports and European communications. No or too few actions are undertaken to encourage relevant cooperations or partnerships within the Europeana Network. Due to the top-down communication, the meetings of the Network don't really have clout at content level. One respondent indicates that the meetings start resembling one another and are therefore becoming less interesting. Native English speakers are also reported to dominate the discussions, which shouldn't really surprise, since it is used as a lingua franca within the context of Europeana.

The transparency of the mechanism is also criticised. The Task Forces, e.g., prove to be closed groups, of which it is hard to become a member.
The participants of the Task Forces (or the former working groups within the framework of the CCPA) often play a passive part once they have been involved. This may be to observe what is being done, proposed and decided within a Europeana context rather than to cooperate oneself and set out the directions for Europeana.

According to some respondents, Europeana has become an institution for which self-preservation has become the main point on the agenda. There is little willingness to listen to the grassroots needs, which is accurately illustrated by a newcomer in the Europeana world. "Isn't it strange that our project isn't mentioned on the EuropeanaPro website ?" For it is the very objective of EuropeanPro to offer a 'generic' website for collecting all knowledge and data. The creation of consultation structures, which often function as an excuse, is also negatively perceived.
Such initiatives risk undermining social support for Europeana before long. The feeling persists that Europeana approaches the Network out of self-interest and self-preservation. One could advance as an excuse that the tedious period of project-based support made it necessary to stress the positive effects, but these effects transcend the own organisation. Europeana should have to be a goal and not a means. Another remark pertaining to this

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[3] http://pro.europeana.eu/web/guest/network

ideological approach was expressed by a respondent who felt that an active participation in the Europeana Network should be a moral obligation, since Europeana should be a cooperation project and not a top-down initiative in which Europe makes the decisions and the participating organisations supply the content and the work. For this reason, these organisations have to be able to take part in the decisions.

3.2. The impact of 'Europeana' on the participating organisation

Does participation in Europeana-related projects have an impact on the project partners as regards organisation and vision development, technical development and visibility?

Impact on organisation and vision development

"*Europeana has been an edifying example when it comes to bringing together cultural heritage from all corners of Europe. As such, it has been a major inspiration for our own platform*"

Participation in Europeana, the respondents claim, has a wide range of effects:
- It is a way of working together with several (inter)national partners and an incentive to start other European projects or to participate in these.
- Through participation one's own collection can be opened up to a wider audience.
- It moreover gives insight into the European subsidisation framework for (digital) cultural heritage. The involvement in projects within eContentPlus and the later CIP-ICT PSP have for example made PACKED vzw aware of the existing work programmes within which it could subsequently submit its 'Digitising Contemporary Art' project proposal. The organisation has also scrutinised the opportunities offered by the Seventh Framework programme.
- Through its project leadership of Digitising Contemporary Art, PACKED vzw has acquired useful and practical information regarding the daily financial management of a consortium, on the arrangements which can best be made with Europeana etc. This way, it can help other interested organisations which plan to participate in Europeana.
- It offers opportunities to actively involve Flemish heritage organisations, which would otherwise not participate in such projects. This is incentivised by the Flemish ad hoc regulations for a financial contribution in the own input (matching funds).
- Being witness to other good (and sometimes bad) practices, in the field of project management and/or the implementation of concrete project tasks, one learns not to make the same mistakes or to heed some aspects in particular. These experiences serve as a confirmation of the own ideas and decisions. It is possible to make adjustments through a wider range of experiences.
- The vision on the re-use of the created digital cultural heritage data is more profound through involvement in the projects. Improved access through Europeana is one of the possibilities for this, but other approaches, such as the opportunities offered by education also need to be explored in this context.

The following witness statement stresses the fact that participation in a Europeana related project allowed to recruit extra personnel (and external knowledge), which also contributed to the introduction of new insights:

> *Through participation in Europeana Fashion, we could extend our team and recruit more specialised members of staff internally, who gave the MoMu digital collection an important push forward on the following aspects:*
> - *Vision/policy on collections*

- *Standardisation/Open metadata/Harmonisation/data model*
- *Intellectual property rights: open culture licences are being (gradually) introduced thanks to the project*
- *Communication/Social media*

It was also pointed out that the use of one's own time comes under pressure when engaging in a project consortium, notwithstanding the resources this generates.

However, innovation is also often met by resistance. As one respondent confirms, the extra publicity and publication opportunities led to both more metadata production and a reservation to publish, due to the strong phrasing and rather vague descriptions in the Data Exchange Agreements.

The following quotation too claims that the vast opening up of digital material isn't necessarily in line with the classical internal processes of the whole organisation:

> *It has taken a very long time before the participation of our organisation in our sectoral aggregator became more or less known internally, even within the involved service. Generally speaking, the archivists were very sceptical about the project, because of the way in which they had to supply external clients with content, which was totally different from what they were used to, among other things. Moreover, the quality of the platform and the website didn't meet the quality requirements which we impose on ourselves when taking a digital initiative ourselves, which only increased the negative perception among some archivists. I took it on me to counter this criticism by claiming that we should consider our sectoral aggregator's website (as well as former and later projects) as a learning pathway.*
> *At the end of the project I have written an internal conclusion on our participation myself. This is the most important lesson which has been communicated to the management of the involved division: in such projects, the project management is primarily interested in the content which the content provider (CP) can supply. When this is indeed implemented, there is little commitment left to keep the CP satisfied. In other words: "take the content and run", which could in turn trigger a "take the money and run" reaction from the CP. In such a scenario, everyone may indeed have met their particular objectives to the detriment of the general interest. And worse still: this could negatively effect us as a content provider. That is why I suggested that our organisation has to claim a clear and important place in the project management of future projects in which our organisation is likely to participate as a content provider, in order to put its mark on (the quality of) the end result: "we have to be in the driver's seat.*

Impact on the technical development

> *We have yet again been confronted with a well-known fact : our database of descriptive metadata does hardly lend itself to exporting metadata.*

This aspect is of course strongly felt because of the tasks which one commits oneself to in European projects. Still, the majority of respondents points to the growing insight in collecting metadata, far-reaching standardisation and interoperability of data and descriptions (a.o. through thesauruses). Ideally, these realisations should be integrated in these organisations' internal work processes.

An organisation such as PACKED vzw participates in various projects, exploring diverse themes throughout. They describe the added value with respect to technical knowledge, and

mapping and export in particular, the examination of good (or) other practices and procedures, the acquisition of knowledge on copyright, the involvement in the development of new data models such as LIDO and Mint and linked open data and terminology. All these experiences trickle down to Flanders through documentation in CEST[4] and vision development in the user group 'cultural heritage and copyright law' (GCEA).

Impact on visibility

All respondents are unanimous in claiming that participation in Europeana doesn't enhance the visibility of one's own collection. The research or technical expertise of the technical partners, on the contrary, indeed find their way to a vaster public.

Beside the visibility out of the Europeana portal, the increasingly important role of the Europeana API is also pointed out. This tool will assure that the available data can also be displayed in other contexts. The cooperation with Wikipedia, in which edit-a-thons are organised with visual materials from Europeana Fashion, will also add to the visibility. Apart from these tools and cooperations, the Community Collection Days, which have been organised in different venues in Flanders this year in the wake of the In Flanders Fields museum have also had a huge impact. Everyone interested was welcome to have their WWI memorabilia digitised and their context recorded. These digitised objects have subsequently been put online through Europeana.[5] The Community Collection Days are part of the Europeana Awareness project, which aims at promoting Europeana.

Other forms of impact

Erfgoedplus.be, which is a key aggregator in the Flemish heritage sector, claims that participation in Europeana boosts credibility among the own rank and file. This is a way to convince participants in an aggregator of the basic requirements for high-quality data.

3.3. The impact of 'Europeana' from a contemplative point of view

Does Europeana exercise an influence on global processes in which the content providers and aggregators are involved? Below you will find the opinion of support centres, academicians, centres of expertise, ..., based on their involvement in technical evolutions, copyright, public private partnerships, the impact of the heritage lobby on the European decision-making process, the international and intersectoral dialogue.

Impact on technical development

At technical level, Europeana enhances standardisation and professionalisation. The European projects which supply data to Europeana bring together technical, content and creative partners from the public and private sector, who would be hard put to meet each other through another channel. Europeana hence plays the role of catalyst in this.

Three remarks have been voiced in the survey:

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[4] cultural heritage standards toolbox, http://www.projectcest.be
[5] http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu

Europeana has become an important factor in the discussions on the description of heritage. Thanks to Europeana, the use of DC and XML has become common in the heritage sector. The EDM model has a strong influence on the development of linked data applications in the heritage sector. However, the relevance of many aspects of this development for the heritage sector are short-lived since they are mostly to the benefit of the Europeana organisation itself and not to the benefit of the collections. It is in principle no problem to apply tools and standards for one's own self-preservation, although this strongly weighs on the ambitions and results of the programme, for the world outside Europeana also evolves rapidly.

Whereas common collection management systems are meant for use within an institution in order to manage one's own collection, Europeana offers a perspective for exchanging and merging data from other sources, with a view to better accessibility and extension of these. This perspective still has to dawn on the developers of collection management systems. This process is starting gradually, in a project such as Europeana Inside for example.

The technology for the semantic web and linked data have existed for some time but is characterised by a huge confidence in technique for bringing about the semantic connections. Due to the difficulties encountered in the implementation of these connections within Europeana, this confidence is shifting towards the realisation that more is needed beside technique. For technique to really work, a lot of work, both organisational and with regard to the contents is needed. The European context allows for a vast-scale reflection and operation.

Impact on copyright

In the field of copyright, Europeana works as a funnel: everyone who opens up digital content, is more or less confronted with the same intellectual property issues. As indicated by the Antwerp Photo Museum, Europeana compels institutions to reflect on copyright and the approach to metadata and other difficult issues. The network around Europeana can cooperate in order to offer solutions.

Through assembling large quantities of information, one has become aware of the fact that forms of free access to and free re-use of information and data are necessary, if we want to accelerate the process of human knowledge development. It is evident that this free access often clashes with the more classical forms of intellectual property, such as copyright. Europeana helps to make this schism more visible. So far, no solutions have been offered. Not surprisingly, there is relatively little 'in copyright' content available in Europeana. One of the respondents remarks that Europeana could be a stronger lever for a thorough reform of copyright. Other respondents argue that this should also be considered from a balanced costs/benefits perspective.

The way in which Europeana enforced DEA, has boosted the debate on copyright in Flanders and in a sense paved the way for the creation of the user group 'cultural heritage and copyright law' (GCEA) and SA&S (Flemish cooperation partnership on copyright and society). It is somewhat deplorable that this attention has only been triggered by the in a sense undemocratic way in which the policy on DEA was launched (see further).

Impact on public private partnerships

The pressure on public private partnerships is getting bigger but concrete implementations have so far been limited. Some projects pose challenges with regard to technique or contents, thus limiting the number of eligible partners. In this case, private partners are called on. For such cooperations, the individual projects are therefore more important than Europeana itself. This could change if Europeana is to focus more on creative re-use.

In 2012 there was enough interest for this problem within the Europeana Network so as to justify the creation of a Task Force. The Europeana Network officers are still engaged in a close follow-up of this problem.

Impact on the international representation of interests

The organisations which represent the interests of the cultural sector as content providers within the context of Europeana at international level lack transparency and social support. There is still too much fragmentation and divergence in the distinct heritage sectors. Various respondents suggest that Europeana could play a role in this. One respondent remarks that the transformation of the CCPA into the Europeana Network seems a step backwards in this respect, even more so since the Europeana Network integrates additional groups which cannot take part in a similar representation of interests and the main objective of which may be observing whether their own interests aren't too much prejudiced in Europeana rather than entering into a real dialogue.

It has also been suggested that Europeana should defend the interests of the digital public domain and deal with its current restrictions. By doing so, Europeana could act as a lobby machine for the promotion of open data, open content and the public domain.

One respondent puts forward that Europeana could also raise awareness among its content providers and strengthen the Europeana projects and aggregators in a structural way, if the content providers assume this role on behalf of Europeana. These projects could evolve into 'ongoing actions', which could be structurally embedded in Europeana.

Impact on international dialogue

(Participation in) Europeana first and foremost offers the opportunity to compare one's own policy with that of the neighbours. Too often, however, approaches adopted by the neighbouring countries are merely copied. It is also possible to learn from each other with attention to subtleties and detail, though, for which Europeana can provide a wider context.

Respondents claim that topic-based (aggregation)projects in particular have an influence on international dialogue, rather than Europeana. The EUscreen and EUscreenXL projects for example offer opportunities for the international network to convene on a more regular basis and to become even more extended, viz. with southern European and eastern

European sector colleagues. This has yielded mutual positive effects such as inspiration and solidarity when it comes to solving technical issues.

Europeana Fashion also succeeded in gathering a consortium of fashion institutions, the appeal of which even stretches to the United States. The participation of both private archives (fashion houses) and public institutions (musea, libraries) is an important aspect of this project, which could evolve into a public private partnership, as described above.

Impact on intersectoral dialogue

Data aggregation exerts a converging impact on the cultural heritage sector, in a vaster field than that of metadata alone. Although the digital dimension is blurring the boundaries between sectors, the debate within Europeana is currently still dominated by the library sector, which is logical given Europeana's previous history as the European Digital Library (EDL). There is increasing awareness, though, that other sectors adopt a different terminology and concepts. It will still take some time and meetings to solve all misunderstandings and develop a common language, which is interpreted by everyone in the same way. Not until then can Europeana come into its own.

Europeana is also breaking way from its own boundaries and reaching out to various disciplines, thus providing a breeding ground for interesting talks between heritage and arts organisations in Flanders, to name but one region. The Ghent University Library for example looks forward to the future opportunities offered by this intersectoral dialogue. The Europeana data model (EDM) will indeed make a huge contribution to the cooperation of heritage organisations with respect to the publication of linked data.

Other forms of impact

Access to heritage in the short term (unlike sustainable conservation) is the most visible objective of Europeana. The initiative encourages cooperation and the quest for standards and helps to drive home the importance of high-quality data for facilitating smooth access and exchange. The Europeana process (the database developing process) could well have more impact than the Europeana product (the database itself). Still, quality is a very complex concept, of which the relevant elements still need to be defined.

3.4. Compulsory signature of the Data Exchange Agreements

The data exchange agreements (DEA) define the modalities according to which content providers and aggregators open up the metadata for re-use via Europeana. DEA supports the open use of metadata (under a Creative Commons licence or CC0), without reference to the identification of the organisation providing the data). Despite years of consultation of diverse stakeholders prior to Europeana's adoption of DEA and its enforcement for all content providers, the feeling prevails that this decision has been taken in a less democratic way and has primarily been prompted by a request which the European Commission as an important supporting partner wanted to see fulfilled.

The compulsory introduction of the DEA had an impact on the commitment of distinct content providers, even if the basic principles for collecting data from various sources and making them available through the Internet haven't been changed. Through enforcing signature of the DEA, Europeana managed to exaggerate some of the DEA principles, which were in several cases new to the traditional debate in the cultural heritage sector. Adding to this the fact that no good examples of similar approaches to re-use were available at that

time, resistance was sparked and was expressed in the advisory opinions of legal advice consortia such as the 'Samenwerkingsverband Auteursrecht en Samenleving' (SA&S) (Partnership for Copyright & Society).

This enforcement has led the overall majority of respondents to limit their supply of metadata to formal metadata. It is usually argued that descriptions are often the fruit of research and hence require an important investment from the supplying institutions.

The Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage for example reports that the survival of the institution partly depends on the visibility and acknowledgement of the supplied work. Since the signature of DEA doesn't provide for the attribution of the supplying institution - Europeana is more interested in traceability than in rich metadata - there is no guarantee as to the link with the supplying institution. However, some respondents have fewer qualms about supplying all metadata, following screening on sensitive (e.g. financial) data, that is.

The fact that monitoring of the re-use is impossible and there is no longer any link with one's own institution is an important argument in this discussion and in the revision of the European directive on public sector information (PSI), in which state funded institutions such as musea and archives come under the scope of the directive. The revised directive lays down that these institutions always have to make their data available, even for commercial use, at the request of third parties. At the time of writing this note, the discussion about an appropriate fee was still ongoing.

Even if free accessibility could be a very good measure provided that the chances of survival of the supplying institutions in a commercialised landscape and with dwindling state aid are also taken into account, questions are raised on the practical implementation and on the return and workload for the supplying institutions and the fate of local heritage, which is mainly the work of volunteers, in particular.

4. Conclusion: Does Europeana rightly enjoy a monopoly?

Since the European Commission has appointed Europeana as the central actor in its digitisation policy, one can rightly claim that Europeana monopolises the European subsidies which were earmarked for digitisation. Opinions vary on this. Centralisation is good and only fair, on the one hand since it isn't incumbent on Europe to have everyone who feels like it, implement their own implementation project. However, it falls to Europe to create the framework for gearing aspects to one another and bring about a common vision. The European Commission has opted for the Europeana approach to implement this. Still, this vision should allow for sufficient flexibility and openness for other visions and solutions on the part of Europeana and for opportunities to develop these in synergy with the orientations developed by Europeana itself. Europeana should be granted the resources to implement this out of an open policy vision.

Despite criticism to the contrary, the resources which reach the sector through this channel, prove a sound incentive for digitisation and the accessibility through uniform standards. The key premise underlying this is the participation of an organisation as a project partner in a subsidised Europeana linked project. These projects are only mounted in response to the yearly calls launched by the European Commission. The themes for which projects can be submitted change and there is mutual competition between the projects. As a result, this approach poses limitations at technical or content level, making it impossible for some elements to be covered. This is illustrated by the fact that many European scientific libraries

had to link up with the European Library in view of the introduction of the Europeana Libraries proposal.

Because of the ad hoc regulations governing the contribution to the matching funds, which the 'Agentschap Kunsten en Erfgoed' (Agency for Arts and Heritage) has supported since 2010 and which has been defined as part of the project subsidies in the Flemish Parliament Act on cultural heritage of 2012, some structurally subsidised cultural heritage organisations have been encouraged to participate in such projects. They are the Ghent Design museum (Partage Plus), the Antwerp Photo Museum (Daguerreobase), the Antwerp Fashion Museum (Europeana Fashion) and PACKED vzw (Digitising Contemporary Art, Linked Heritage en Athena Plus). This survey has shown this support to be valuable, since participation in Europeana linked projects triggers important internal processes and encourages institutions to provide answers to future-oriented questions which are relevant in defining the role of the cultural heritage organisations in the information society. The Europeana system, which forms the basis for such projects, meets the objective targeted by the European Commission in this respect.

The extent to which Europeana is focused on self-preservation and the own organisation with regard to technical and communicative aspects as well as the involvement of the diverse stakeholders group, can count on less appreciation from the respondents. Transparency in the decision-making process should be a major point of attention, as is rightly remarked by the Ghent Design museum and BIBnet.

The following quote by PACKED vzw excellently illustrates the prevailing feeling:

> *Europeana recently launched a call via email to invite support for protests against a possible cessation of Europeana financing. In this call the own threatened financing was focused on, while the focus could have been extended to the threatened project funds of the vaster 'field' (i.e. not only the subsidies for Europeana itself but also the subsidies which are linked to it). Such an approach reinforces the impression in the 'field' that the Europeana office is primarily concerned about its own preservation. To avoid this, the Europeana office, being a key player in the European digitisation landscape, could have chosen an approach which is more targeted at supporting the preservation of the vast 'field'. The Europeana office at times seems to forget that Europeana doesn't only need the financial support of the European Commission to play its role to the full, but also the cooperation and content of the vaster 'field'. The balance between those two interests is often broken.*

Without meaning to repress this criticism, we should stress that until now Europeana has always adopted a project-based approach, on the basis of CIP-ICT PSP, as has been explained earlier. This allowed for a rich landscape with various dimensions, on the one hand and some intransparency in the coordination, on the other. The intransparency was further compounded by the not so constructive signal relayed to the projects as well as the member states by the MSG on the occasion of the search for means to garner own contribution for projects in which the Europeana office was involved as a partner. At the time of writing this note, there still isn't a clear decision on the Connecting Europe Facility, the infrastructure for new public services, of which Europeana should become a structural part. If this infrastructure is implemented, this structural support is likely to open up new perspectives.

Europeana could respond to some expectations within this framework:
The Europeana Network could be converted into a genuine General Assembly. It is indeed the efforts of the content providers and aggregators combined which have shaped

Europeana into what it is today. It may be time for the big institutions such as royal libraries, national archives, ... to focus on a wide perspective and not only one's own needs. This should be the direction in which the Europeana Foundation is to evolve.

BIBnet is requesting a more active policy on the public library network, such as facilitating an up-to-date offer and updating the heritage offer. The implementation of the latter point calls for more social support in the field of copyright reform in order to make cultural heritage widely accessible and an encouragement of intersectoral dialogue and intersectoral projects. Europeana could capitalise on that. The survey suggests that Europeana should impose itself more as a defender of the interests of the cultural field and steer clear of the commercial direction, under the guise of motor of the cultural industry. In recent years, actual practice has proved this to be a very delicate balance.

Anticipations are created in the field of visibility too. Europeana is only visible through projects, but absent from the communication to a vaster public. Communication is confined to people who are already familiar with Europeana, although the community collection days and the edit-a-thons may be an exception to this. Europeana has low visibility outside the heritage sector. Communication and interaction with the public at large would also be relevant.