



## Europeana Foundation Governing Board Meeting

30 March 2016  
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Paris, BnF  
Quai François-Mauriac  
75706 Paris Cedex 13

**Dutch Presidency Council Conclusions, Procurement and Core v. Generic**  
*Action proposed: For information and discussion*

**Circulation:**

Europeana Foundation Governing Board Members & Observers

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# Council conclusions, core and generic services and procurement

This document is a response from the Europeana Foundation and Europeana Network Association Members' Council to the *Draft Council conclusions on access, visibility and use of European digital cultural heritage and in particular, the role of Europeana*. It includes comments on the conclusions themselves, then discusses recommendations for 'core' and 'generic' services, and three considerations for safeguards if procurement becomes the chosen route for funding.

## 1. Europeana Network Association Members Council<sup>1</sup> response to Draft Council conclusions

1. The introductory paragraphs are not very strong in underpinning the value of cultural heritage for society, as put down in the EU Treaty and Unesco declarations, e.g. in paragraph 2, verbs like 'promotes' and 'allows for' seem to soften the urgency of these conclusions. We would welcome a more powerful type of language that does justice to the role of cultural heritage in society, especially from the perspective of cultural heritage as part of the public space, as expressed in the Europeana Network Association's first input to the Dutch Presidency last November.

2. In the conclusions, four main actors are mentioned: Europeana, the Member States, MSEG and the European Commission. However, the document doesn't clarify the relationship between these actors or the underlying governance structures and its division of responsibilities. This makes the paragraphs that relate to the governance of Europeana (paras. 7, 15, 35) unclear. The conclusions state (para. 15) that the Europeana governance lacks inclusiveness. However, with the installment of the Europeana Network Association and its Members Council, in June 2015, the governance of Europeana has already been made more inclusive. The real issue at hand seems to be the nature of the relationship between Europeana and policy-makers at the EU and MS levels, and how they influence each other outside of the formal governance of the Europeana network.

For instance, the role of the MSEG network needs to be clarified. It is introduced in para. 26 with no reference in the previous articles, e.g., can MSEG make strategic decisions about Europeana that overrule decisions made by the Europeana Network Association/Members Council or the Europeana Foundation Board?

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<sup>1</sup> Europeana Network Association has a Members Council of 30 individuals elected by the Europeana Network Association Members of nearly 1500 people.

3. A sidenote to the previous remark: as the November recommendations from the Europeana Network Association clearly show, there is a fifth actor missing in the conclusions, and that is the user. User involvement and audience development should not only be addressed in a passive way, as is done now, but also in an active way.
4. In the paragraph 'Recognizing that the following challenges lie ahead', the focus is very much on Europeana, and much less on challenges with digitization of cultural heritage in itself. Because of this, this section becomes less strategic and more instrumental than it should be. Europeana should not be presented as the main problem, but as the major player to move things forward.
5. The European Commission plays a crucial role in addressing the copyright issues at hand for the cultural heritage community. It might make sense to add a paragraph about the role of the EC in relation to copyright reform in the section 'Invites the Commission to'.
6. There needs to be a strong statement that longer-term structural operational funding is needed for Europeana, as without it, the idea of shared infrastructures and services and tools to reduce costs and innovation for the cultural heritage sector of Europe, thereby adding value to the citizens and the Member States in a cost effective way, will not happen.
7. We would welcome a paragraph under the section 'Invites Member States to' that not only addresses the national issues, but also the international context in which the MS operate. Transnational and regional collaborations between countries (e.g. Nordic countries, Netherlands/Belgium) are very important assets in the wider European context, e.g. to align national strategies for digital heritage and to drive shared solutions forward internationally.
8. More realisation of the roles of national and domain aggregators the development and maintenance of Europeana as a platform is needed in the document. For instance where it is mentioned that Member States support by providing content through their cultural heritage institutions this should also say and national aggregators. Domain aggregators also contribute expertise such as for the discovery of archive fonds or streaming film.

## 2. The division between Core and Generic Services

Europeana's services can be divided into two categories: core and generic. The difference between the two types of services is important as they are funded through different mechanisms. Note that some services could be either core or generic, depending on the conditions under which they are implemented.

Core services are fundamental to the delivery of the platform, managed by the Europeana Foundation and funded by the EU. We must ensure that the services that are essential in the day-to-day running of the platform are set as 'core' services to maintain their funding.

Generic services are more peripheral - they contribute to the Europeana ecosystem but do not affect the ability of the platform to run, ingest, manage or deliver data and can be moved or replaced. Generic services are funded jointly by the EU and Member States.

Below is a list of core and generic services (a fuller list is attached as an appendix):

### **Core services**

- The infrastructure - development, management and retrieval of data of different formats and languages
- The means of obtaining the data (aggregation)
- Data improvement and enrichment (R&D)
- R&D for the exposure and management of data
- Maintenance of a network of experts and community for the improvement of partnerships
- Support of domain-specific 'expert hubs', providing expertise in specific areas core to aggregation as well as policy-making and R&D
- Policies and framework development for data interoperability and standardization
- The means of distributing or providing access to the data (websites and APIs)

### **Generic services**

- The curation of thematic collections
- The digitization of cultural heritage collections for inclusion in Europeana
- National aggregation of cultural heritage collections to be brought into Europeana
- Hosting of other data delivery functionalities which can be replaced if not maintained

### **Services that could be either Core or Generic:**

- Analytic tools and data analysis, including computing power behind them
- User research – using data from Europeana but not carried out through the site itself
- Hosting of (specialized) vocabularies, terminologies and ontologies for others to use
- Enrichment services, e.g. geotagging
- Building of tools for improving user experience e.g. for schoolchildren or visually impaired

## **3. Procurement of services**

Procurement of services from the European Commission has become a strong candidate mechanism for funding Europeana after 2016. From the perspective of the Europeana Foundation, procurement of services solves a number of issues related to member state co-funding and non-eligibility of costs in the current grant-based funding model. Although, on

the downside, it switches ownership of the service and strategy to the Commission and diminishes both the feeling of and actual responsibility of the member states. The Europeana Foundation, supported by the Europeana Network Association, feels that should procurement end up being the preferred model for member states, such a model should take into account the following three considerations.

### **Development of terms of reference for the CEF work programme**

Procurement will be based on the CEF work programme that specifies the key characteristics of the services to be procured by the European Commission. This work programme must maximize the value created for the public, take fully into account the needs of the cultural heritage sector and be in accordance with technological feasibility. To ensure that this is the case, the work programme needs to be based on terms of reference drawn up by a body that has sufficient expertise and representativeness. The Europeana Network Association recommends that the existing Member States Expert Group<sup>2</sup> could meet both these requirements and should be tasked with formulating the work programme for the procurement of Europeana core services, so that they better meet the needs of the communities to be served. These terms of reference should include the necessity of continuing the Europeana Network as well as pure technical specifications. A check that the resulting tender for procurement aligns with the terms of reference would be important.

### **Ownership of assets**

A consequence of a shift from grant to procurement-based funding is the raising of questions about the ownership of assets that are produced under the procurement contract. It has been suggested that the shift to a procurement model implies that the ownership of all assets (such as the Europeana database) would need to be transferred to the European Commission. From our perspective, this is not the best model for maximising the public benefit of Europeana. Instead, we propose that the procurement rules need to ensure that no single entity can exercise exclusive control over assets that are produced under contract. Europeana has an established tradition of ensuring (via open licences) that assets such as data and software can be used by anyone.

### **Duration of contracts and financial consequences**

Finally, the shift from a project grant-based to a procurement-based funding model should also be used as an opportunity to reduce the overheads associated with short-term funding cycles. Service contracts should be multi-annual and the possibility of making them renewable should be explored. Clarity on VAT requirements needs to be understood in relation to the amount of money that would actually be available.

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<sup>2</sup> The MSEG would be strengthened with the appointment of more senior experts in digitization and higher level policy-makers in each country, not to make decisions but to be able to inform and work with the right people and institutions from the cultural heritage sector in their member state.

## Appendix 1.

### Fuller list of Core versus Generic Services

| <b>Service</b>   | <b>Currently ( DSI-1)<br/>executed by</b> | <b>Proposal</b> | <b>Remarks</b>   |
|--|---|-----------------|--|
| <b>Platform</b>  |   |                 |  |
| Maintaining and collaboratively developing the network-wide metadata exchange format (EDM) | EF  | Core Services   |  |
| Harvesting or receiving data from data partners  | EF  | Core Services   | Data partners are mostly aggregators.  |
| Storage, clearing, transforming, ingesting and management of the data                      | EF  | Core Services   | <p>“clearing” comprises validation, cleaning, test ingests for review purposes, etc.</p> <p>“transforming” comprises ESE to EDM or adding geotags, scaling of binaries, etc.</p> <p>“ingesting” comprises extraction of retrieval information for the search index, packaging into appropriate data storage format</p> |

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|---|----|----------------------|---|
|   |    |                      |   |
|   |    |                      | NB need to be more precise here; make clear CS is not taking over storage from MI's.  |
| Operating the retrieval and access layers   | EF | Core Services        | Building, updating, maintaining indexes and other access methods (in the future maybe via retrieval languages like SPARQL or the QL of the underlying storage/database system)                                |
| Maintenance and improvement of the infrastructure; management of a distributed cloud storage and computing infrastructure, architecture of the whole system | EF | Core Services        | Internal team in partnership with cloud based hosting companies and software providers. This could also be national aggregators and their infrastructure partners but a funded project is needed to set it up |
| Analysing data for enrichment and quality improvement   | EF | Generic/Core Service | e.g. determining technical metadata like image resolutions, color palettes, etc.as basis for new features in "Europeana Collections"  |
| Providing interfaces for data access for  | EF | Core Services        | OAI-PMH, SPARQL endpoint, dedicated APIs  |

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|---|----|---------------------------|--|
| internal and external clients   |    |                           | The “Europeana Collections” frontend would be the most important internal client.  |
| Development and operation of connectors to other data platforms   | EF | Core and Generic Services | “Europeana as a data hub”,<br>examples for data platforms are Wikimedia Commons (GLAM-Wiki tool set), Wikidata, flickr, ...<br>“pushing” this data to the data platforms could be part of the Europeana publishing process |
| Providing process and usage data to data partners   | EF | Core services             | e.g. the Statistics Dashboard  |
| Policies and programmes relating to data quality, rights statements, multilingualism, privacy and data management are required. | EF | Core services             | Specialist partners are involved in legal advice and documentation.  |
| Managing the Network of Experts   | EF | Core Services             | A wide network of Experts are involved in development of Europeana strategy and work plans, and contribute to technical and organizational development of the  |



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|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
|  |                         |                         | platform through participation in task forces.  |
| Exploration and implementation of new technological opportunities to improve the data management services and search engine,     | EF and consortium       | Core Services           | For instance software development, web-design, (cloud) storage, data ingestion, web crawling, content reuse frameworks and business requirements.   |
| Experimentation and evaluation of results to improve search and the ranking of results in a multilingual environment.            | EF                      | Core Services           |   |
| Partnerships in education and research such as iTunesU, European Schoolnet, Euroclio, Inventing Europe, Clarin, DARIAH, BBC RES. | EF                      | Core & Generic          | Formally marked as 'distribution'. However, though re-use projects by these and other partners should be seen as generic services, the provider of the core platform must be able to broker, to the uplift and upscaling and sustaining of project results.[MOU4] |
| ENUMERATE Observatory  | DEN (consortiumpartner) | Core Service or Generic | It could be considered to make this a separate assignment to be commissioned by the Commission to assure the  |

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|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|
|  |                                |                      | independence of the observatory. Requires further development and set-up of new surveys on the status of digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe  |
| Operating and developing the technical infrastructure for standardized international Rights Statements | (EF, DPLA, consortium partner) | Generic/Core Service | <a href="http://rightsstatements.org/">http://rightsstatements.org/</a>   |
| Hosting of distinct services e.g. IIIF server, vocabularies, embedr.eu etc                             | Aggregator                     | Generic/Core Service |   |
| Developing and operating a persistent identifier (PI) service  | (EF, Aggregator)               | Core Service         | comprises developing and maintaining a policy as well as the operation of the PI resolver service   |
| Acting as a (proxy) registration authority, e.g. for ISIL  | (EF, consortium partner)       | Generic Service      | “PIs for institutions”, not every European country has a national ISIL allocation agency, Europeana could act as “proxy” until those are established, or open other markets (like monument agencies) for ISIL |

|   |            |                      |  |
|---|------------|----------------------|--|
| User Research   | MS/Expert  | Generic/Core Service |  |
| Analytic tools for data quality improvement   | Expert     | Generic/Core Service |  |
| Aggregation   |            |                      |  |
| Coordination, data and licence framework management, data-enrichment and processing so that it can be redistributed via the API's or shown Collections or channels. | EF         | Core Services        |  |
| Operating a (data management) service desk  | EF         | Core Services        | Acquisition of new data partners, accompanying the data partners through the harvesting, clearing, ingesting and publishing of their collections, processing of feedback, bug reports, questions, etc. |
| European Domain aggregators.  | Consortium | Core Services        | These are: The European Library, Archives Portal Europe, European Film Gateway, EUscreen (television heritage),  |

|   |                   |                              |   |
|---|-------------------|------------------------------|---|
|   |                   |                              | CARARE (archeology),<br>Michael (museums)   |
| National aggregators  | -                 | Generic Services             |   |
| Thematic aggregating initiatives and projects.  | -                 | Core and/or Generic Services | Europeana Fashion,<br>HOPE, OpenUP!<br>EUScreen   |
| Digitisation of collections   | MS and CHI        | Generic                      | Costs not really catered for in foreseen budgets  |
| Enrichment eg geotagging  | MS or Expert      | Generic/core                 |   |
| Distribution  |                   |                              |   |
| Europeana curated websites for end users: Europeana Collections and thematic channels | EF and Consortium | Core and Generic Services    | If Collections becomes a generic service maintaining even the gains made now in user experience, multilingualism, search engine retrieval becomes nigh on impossible across 28 MS and thousands of data providers. To make this work from a user experience and brand recognition point of view – all channels should use platform technology, functionality and features. Only the relationships with new data providers |

|   |                          |   |   |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|
|   |                          |   | and the curation of the website fall into the generic service category  |
| Europeana Labs for the re-user, creative industries, with data sets, technical data and help                            | EF                       | Core  | Labs is the access point for data by creative, by other developers, and even by education, tourism etc                                      |
| Promotion and sharing on third-party platforms such as Wikimedia, Pinterest, Twitter and other social media.            | EF                       | Core Services and some Generic Services and/or MS | Besides mass uploads, agreeing on protocols is part of the work of the platform. To get Europeana Collections material to where the user is |
| New re-use, promotion, and distribution initiatives   | -                        | Generic Services                                  |   |
| Tools to improve user experience  | External expert services | Core/ Generic Services                            | Visualisation applications, browse improvement or for the visually disabled   |
| Digitisation of specialised pan-european collections e.g. Roma material, all da Vinci codices, every recording of Lizst | MS                       | Generic   |   |