

CENL

Foundation Conference of European National Librarians

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Conference of European National Librarians welcomes European Commission's efforts to support the creation of a "European Digital Library"

The Conference of European National Librarians, CENL, welcomes with enthusiasm the European Commission's plan to promote digital access to Europe's heritage through the European Digital Library by co-funding the creation of a Europe-wide network of digitisation centres and by addressing the issue of the appropriate framework for intellectual property rights protection in the context of digital libraries.

CENL shares the vision of a European Digital Library and has been working towards this goal by creating TEL, The European Library, which received European Community funding in its early stage. CENL is honoured and pleased by the Commission's intention to build the European Digital Library upon the TEL-infrastructure. The European Library is the webservice of the 45 CENL members providing access to the catalogue records and digital collections of currently 15 European National Libraries. By the end of 2006 the number of European National Libraries fully participating in the service will be enlarged by the ten new member states of the European Union which prepare to join The European Library in the European Community funded project TEL-ME-MOR, and by all remaining EU and EFTA member states.

CENL strongly believes that TEL is a model platform and model organisational network for building the European Digital Library. As a group, the members of CENL are the custodians of Europe's cultural published heritage – many of them according to legal deposit, many of them for the whole period of time of their nation's history. This forms the basis for the European Digital Library, a highly visible, multilingual access point, dedicated to the digital resources of Europe's cultural institutions.

CENL especially welcomes the European Commission's plans to expand this collaboration among the national libraries to archives and museums to create a true European Digital Library. CENL will embrace any moves to deepen existing contacts to groups of European archives and museums and to discuss the roadmap towards a European Digital Library. As the Europe of the future will be larger than it is now it is also very important to address from the very beginning all European countries, not only those that are today's EU Member States. Building a scalable system does not only mean technical scalability, but also functional scalability: It means taking into account all the European languages with their different character sets.

Joining forces and adopting a similar approach would realise pragmatically the vision of a true European Digital Library.

Useful links:

Conference of European National Librarians, CENL: www.cenl.org

The European Library: www.theeuropeanlibrary.org

TEL-ME-MOR: www.telmemor.net

Press release European Commission:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/253&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

About CENL: The Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) is a foundation under Dutch law with the aim of increasing and reinforcing the role of national libraries in Europe, in particular in respect of their responsibilities for maintaining the national cultural heritage and ensuring the accessibility of knowledge in that field. Members of CENL are the national librarians of all Member States of the Council of Europe. The conference currently consists of 45 members from the following 43 European countries:

Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vatican City.