MinervaEC supports the European Commission Initiative "2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment" and contributes to the implementation of the "Dynamic Action Plan for the EU coordination of digitisation of cultural and scientific content", launched by the EU Member States in Brussels in November 2005.

MinervaEC is aligned with the Commission Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2005/652/EC) and the Council Conclusions adopted in November 2006 (2006/C 297/01).

The partners

Austria • Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK)
• Salzburg Research Forschungsgesellschaft mbH
Belgium • Vlaams Ministerie voor Cultuur, Joop en Moda, Agentschap Kunsten en Erfgoed
• Ministére de la Communauté française de Belgique
• inp3 - politique scientifique - Service d'information S&K / RIS
Wetenschappenbelang - Dienst voor W&I Information (Federal Science Policy Office)
Czech Republic • Ministerstvo kultury Ceske Republic
Denmark • Kulturarvsstyrelsen
Finland • Helsingin yliopisto
France • Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication
• Association Dédale
Germany • Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz
Greece • Empeoriko Parapenteuriko Istituto Ekklenikon Koinonin «Agogeikonia»
• Elliniko-filióikó Eritkóiko Patrýmyn
• Elliniko Eritkóiko Patrýmyn
Hungary • Nemzeti Kulturális Örökség Minisztériuma
Ireland • An Oireachtas Leabharlanna (The Library Council)
• National Museum of Ireland

Italy • Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (coordinator)
• Amitié
Korea • State Agency for Culture Information Systems of Korea
Luxembourg • Ministère de la Culture, de l’Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche
Malta • Il-Heritage Malta
Poland • Biblioteka Narodowa
• Stowarzyszenie - Międzyjednostkowe Centrum Zapobiegania Informacji
Portugal • Conselho Nacional do Ministério da Cultura
Slovak Republic • Slovenská národná knižnica
Slovenia • Ministrstvo za Kulturo Republike Slovenije
Spain • Biblioteca Nacional de España
Sweden • Riksarkivet
United Kingdom • Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

MinervaEC is a Thematic Network funded by the European Commission under the eContent Plus Programme and coordinated by the Italian Ministry of Culture (Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali).

The project, started in October 2006, will last for 24 months bringing together stakeholders and experts from all over Europe and capitalising the results achieved by the previous Minerva projects.
**Objectives**

The general objectives of the network are:
- Improve accessibility to and visibility of European digital cultural resources;
- Support the development of the European Digital Library for accessing cultural material and digital preservation;
- Contribute to increasing interoperability between existing networks;
- Promote the use of cultural digital resources by businesses and citizens;
- Reinforce the European position in the global market competition;
- Facilitate the exploitation of cultural digital resources, providing clear rules for reuse and re-use, respecting and protecting the creators’ rights.

**Target users**

The beneficiaries of the actions of the project are:
- national experts are appointed by the national partners for the groups that represent an interest in their respective countries;
- public and private organisations and institutions that create, collect or own digital cultural material and digital preservation;
- private citizens, interested in receiving quality contents, reliable and directly accessible through high quality technological solutions;
- universities and schools, which wants to use cultural digital resources, providing clear rules for their use and re-use, respecting and protecting the creators’ rights.

**The Working groups**

Five working groups are established in the frame of the MinervaEC project:
- Assessment and evaluation
- Inclusion, dissemination, existing standards
- European cultural content interoperability framework
- Quality, Accessibility and Usability
- Best practice for content enrichment

The working groups are organised at national and European levels:
- national experts are appointed by the national partners for the groups that represent an interest in their respective countries;
- the public and private organisations and institutions that contribute to the creation of the European digital library.

The MinervaEC working groups will contribute to the implementation of the priorities indicated for the Member States in the Council Conclusion on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation. Quoted from the Council Conclusions [Member States are invited to]:

- Monitor digitisation activities and implement the Action Plan on digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation;
- Contribute to the European digital library, a multilingual common access point to Europe’s distributed cultural heritage;
- Improve the comparability of strategies for digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation;
- Exchange best practices within and between Member States on related issues;
- Contribute to an effective overview of progress at European level.

**Impact**

MinervaEC is expected to contribute to stimulating decision makers and implementers in carrying out their initiatives in content enrichment, in creating the conditions to improve the quality of cultural contents and services as well as enhancing accessibility of digital content.

A relevant example is the Michael service www.michael-culture.eu (project) and www.michael-culture.org (service). Quoted from the Council Conclusions [Member States are invited to]:

- Include national strategies to enhance user’s satisfaction, the quality of cultural material and digital preservation;
- Improve the comparability of strategies for digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation;
- Exchange best practices within and between Member States on related issues;
- Contribute to an effective overview of progress at European level.

**The activities**

Workshops and seminars on:
- Minerva tools for digitisation of cultural heritage
- Quality of cultural websites
- Best practice for content enrichment
- Handbooks, Guidelines and Studies:
  - IPR Guidelines
  - Technical Guidelines
  - Study on user needs
  - Report on European interoperability
  - European directory of the websites regulatory framework
  - Map of the cultural heritage in Europe

**Minerva Award**

The Minerva Award for “Best practice in cultural heritage websites” will be assigned to cultural heritage projects that are outstanding realisations of how to make cultural heritage content best available online to different audiences.

Focussing on the idea of how to make our rich cultural and scientific content offerings easily findable, the Minerva Award will give recognition to those projects that excel and perform exceptionally well in terms of accessibility, usability and interoperability.

An international jury of independent experts will select the most outstanding projects which are then invited to the winners ceremony which take place under the aegis of the Lisbon Summit in the first half of 2008.

The categories and award criteria as well as all information on how to nominate a project for the Minerva Award will be available on the Minerva website.

**The reports**

The reports offer an up-to-date synopsis of policies, programmes and projects in the field of digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe, with contributions from all the Member States that share the Dynamic Action Plan. Targeted to policy-makers, decision-makers and managers responsible or involved in the field of new technologies applied to cultural and scientific content, the reports also point out challenges and possibilities for the future, to contribute to the construction of the European digital library.