**Title of the suggested Action:**

Digitization of cultural and scientific heritage in WBC

**Subtitle (or short description in one sentence):**

Coordination of activities in the field of digitization of cultural and scientific heritage in WBC

**Description of the Action (approx. 1 page):**

Recently published “COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION of 27 October 2011 on the digitization and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2011/711/EU)” emphasize importance of ensuring greater access to and use of digitized repositories as a tool in promoting Europe’s diverse and multilingual heritage. Digital preservation and access to cultural and scientific heritage resources involves knowledge from different specialized fields. Practical work in this field requires up-to-date knowledge on technologies and research achievements, but also satisfying the specific needs of the local institutions. All that demands careful coordination of activities to integrate isolated research groups towards agreement on a common set of recommendations and forming real-life collaborations.

The objective of the proposed action concerns establishing of the regional body responsible for coordination of digitization activities in WB. That body, consisting of leading regional experts and stakeholders in the field of digitization, would be responsible for:

* promoting systematic, coherent and sustainable regional approach to digitization of cultural and scientific heritage in the framework of Europeana, ensuring the use of common digitization standards,
* developing guidelines for setting up or reinforcing national strategies and actions plans for digitization and the long-term preservation of digitized material,
* setting up or reinforcing national aggregators for Europeana,
* setting up the regional aggregators in specific domains for Europeana in specific interlinked topics of mutual interest,
* encouraging public private partnerships in the field aiming at common cultural and economic benefits,
* establishing channels for knowledge and best practices transfer from EU to WB, and a network of regional specialists in the field,
* organizing the regional calls for digitization projects and monitoring digitization activities in the region of WB, and enhancing the regional participation in EU programmes,
* realizing dissemination activities (publishing the journal, organizing annual conferences, expert meetings, workshops, raise awareness among the general public etc.),

**References to running activities, lessons learnt from other regions, etc. (one paragraph):**

The main regional activity is related to South-Eastern European Digitization Initiative (SEEDI, [http://seedi.ncd.org.rs](http://seedi.ncd.org.rs/)) which was started in 2004, with the main goals to build awareness of the need for digitization of cultural and scientific heritage in the region and to mobilize the existing human and material resources. SEEDI brings together researchers, scholars, representatives of cultural institutions from more than 15 regional and EU-countries, organizes annual conferences and publishes a journal “Review of the National Center for Digitization” (<http://elib.mi.sanu.ac.rs/journals/ncd>). The main achieved benefit of SEEDI is that the communication between WBC centers and people having an interest in digitization of cultural and scientific heritage has been greatly improved. On the other hand, the main failures are that no official cooperation among WBC has been established, and that the relevant WBC ministries have not participated in digitization activities proposed by SEEDIsts.

**Actors to be involved in the implementation and their roles (max. half a page):**

The main institutional actors would be WB-institutions that run SEEDI:

* Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts – Serbia, coordinator of activities,
* National library of Serbia – Serbia, contributor
* National and university library of Croatia – Croatia, contributor
* National library of Montenegro "Đurđe Crnojević" – Montenegro, contributor
* Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Sarajevo - Bosnia and Herzegovina, contributor
* National and university library of Slovenia – Slovenia, contributor
* Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade, Serbia, contributor,

but other institutions may be also involved .

**Expected impact (one paragraph):**

The strategic impact of this proposal would be:

* mapping of local practices to EC state-of-the-art and increasing local awareness, and
* filling up the existing gap in availability of and accessibility to digital repositories between well-developed EU countries and WBC.

This would be of benefit both for the digitization field development in the region of WB, and for the interested parties from the EU, as well as for the citizens that will be able to get higher quality cultural and scientific heritage resources from the region. This would be made possible through the increased availability of diverse materials in electronic form, which would be presented in a more consistent way, and in addition to this, interlinked.

**Relevance to the WBC region (one paragraph):**

The practice in the region of WB is still not matching the priorities in digitization, communicated on the top EU-level. In this region we have rich cultural content still underrepresented in the e-space. Another concern of the regional cultural heritage institutions on the global scale nowadays is the adoption of brand-new ICT in the sector. These issues would be addressed and

**Author**:

Dr. Zoran Ognjanović, Research Professor,

Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,

Kneza Mihaila 36, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

tel: 381-11-2630-170 / email: zorano@mi.sanu.ac.rs