

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso has announced that the European Commission will entrust three personalities - Maurice Lévy (CEO of Publicis), Elisabeth Niggemann (Head of the German National Library) and Jacques De Decker (writer) - to come up with recommendations on how best to speed up the digitisation, online accessibility and preservation of cultural works across Europe. This Reflection Group will examine the various ongoing initiatives involving both public and private partners (notably the Google Books project) and copyright issues to find ways to boost the digitisation efforts of the complete collections held by libraries, museums and archives in Europe. These recommendations will ultimately help Europeana, Europe's digital library, reach a new dimension: today the Europeana portal (www.europeana.eu) already offers access to over 7 million digitised books, maps, photographs, film clips, paintings and musical extracts, but this is only a small part of all the works held by Europe's cultural institutions. The establishment of the Reflection Group is part of the Commission's broader strategy to help the cultural sector make the transition towards the digital age. The Group, who will report to Commission Vice President for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes and Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androulla Vassiliou, has been requested to submit its conclusions before the end of the year.

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