Digitization of natural and cultural heritage in Bulgaria

Svetlana Dimitrova – Sotirova
Position: Project Coordinator
Institution: Euroregion Pleven-Olt Association

Miercurea Ciuc I 06/09/2016
„If Europe is to be created again, I would not start with the economy but with the culture, because the culture belongs to the entire humanity ... "

Jean Claude Monnet
Bulgarian heritage has European and World importance but it is still not available online, nor is existing in mass electronic form.

**Bulgaria is the only EU country:**

- Without National digitization strategy or single concept in the field of digitization of natural and cultural heritage
- Without single register and actual database of cultural and historical heritage
- Without single and user – friendly built Information System
- Without common museum software for automatic control and inventory of exposition collections
A survey of Bulgarian Library – Information Association, held in 2013, states that:

- Small part of library materials are digitized (only 1/4 of the libraries digitize units; just a little above 5% of the content was digitized);

- Does not exist National register of digitized library objects;

- Without national coordination of digitization processes;

- The commitments between libraries, state and private sector are not allocated;

- The budget devoted to digitization in 87% of libraries is 0,00 BGN.

The situation in 2016, three years later, remains unchanged. And this is understandable given the fact that does not exist government policy related to digitization.
Current situation in Regional Library - Pleven:
Digitization in the library is in a very early stage. The library digitized documents such as regional studies - periodicals and books. The entire local periodicals issued until 1945 owned by the library were digitized and now are available online. Have been digitized also 20 books issued until 1945. The library has a high quality scanner and trained staff.
РЕГИОНАЛНА БИБЛИОТЕКА
„ХРИСТО СМИРЕНСКИ”
ПЛЕВЕН
The museums are seriously lagging behind with the digitization of funds and expositions. Each museum works separately with different software and equipment.

### Digitization in museums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Total Museums</th>
<th>Digitize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Museums

- Count: 2158121
- Digitized: 2374936
- Presented online: 2409102

Year:
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
Identified tendencies

- Positive tendency in the availability of activities in digitization of cultural values exposed in Bulgarian museums;
- Presence of museum institutions, which have not yet initiated digitization activities;
- Disturbingly big difference in the ratio cultural values - digitized cultural values - cultural values presented online;
- Insufficient and inadequate for the XXI century virtual presence of museum institutions.
In Bulgaria does not exist an online access to metadata for paintings and their digital copies even in municipal and state galleries. There is not a centralized point for digitization of paintings.
Bulgaria is known worldwide for its intangible cultural heritage, especially with the folklore. But not because of digitized content, but thanks to the participation of our folklore ensembles in festivals and tours around the world.
Digitization of natural heritage is expressed only in capturing natural sites, plant and animal species in their natural environment.

Mainly for two purposes:

1. Advertising – promotion of natural sites as tourist destinations – Project „Share Bulgaria“
2. Research - By periodically capturing a single natural object - tracking its change over time.
Objectives /of our participation in the project/: 

- To develop a national program for digitization of cultural and historical heritage;
- To establish a common register containing all digitized objects;
- To establish common standards for the country digitization in accordance with the European standardization guidelines;
- To establish a plan for the application of the program which will identify financial instruments and deadlines for implementation.
The experts agree that without digitization of national cultural heritage Bulgaria remains outside the process of the common European development because digitization primarily means enhancing the possibilities for access and socialization of the content.
Thank you for attention!

Prepared by: Iliana Georgieva

Euroregion Pleven-Olt Association

evroregionplevenolt@gmail.com

www.cbicenterspks.eu

With many thanks to:

Dafinka Nenova, Senior Expert in Direction "Cultural heritage, museums and fine arts," Ministry of Culture