CD-ETA
Interreg Europe

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Digitization of Natural and Cultural Heritage

in Conditions of COVID-19 Pandemic

Interregional Webinar

State-of-Art

Greece

Prof. Vagelis Papadakis
University of Patras

Introduction

- The COVID-19 pandemic crisis had a sudden and significant impact on the arts and cultural heritage (galleries, libraries, archival collections, museums, sites of cultural value etc).

- The global health crisis, as well as the resulting uncertainty, has affected both the operation of these organizations as well as people working on this sector and the wider public

FACTS

- The Digital production and dissemination has become the norm. **The online consumption of culture** provided the much-needed involvement and detachment from the monotony of lockdown

- Revenues and incomes dried up, as living cultural experiences stopped.

- Funds focused more to issues with social impact

- The **need for adoption and application of digitization practices** in the promotion of natural and cultural heritage was highlighted more than ever during the last two years

- The adoption of digital technology in Europe has increased from 81% to 95% as a result of the COVID-19 crisis - an increase that would take two to three years in most industries, at pre-pandemic rates (McKinsey, 2020).

National Actions

- Developing **alternative ways for citizens** to access culture was a basic priority since the outbreak of the pandemic, as culture has proven to be the citizens' refuge.

- The Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports has built **a repository of cultural content**, created by its own services and supervised organisations. It consists of material from the huge cultural reserve — monuments, museums, archaeological sites, publications — as well as contemporary cultural productions. These include **digital tours of museum collections**, **online showing of performances**, **motion pictures and concerts, e-courses etc.** The reservoir is continuously expanded with new material.

National Good Practices

- **Acropolis Museum** (online digital applications offering the opportunity for young and old to discover the Museum's exhibits.)

- **Archaeological Museum of Thebes** (one of the most important archaeological museums in Greece, as some of the collections it includes are rare or unique in their kind.)

- **National Gallery** (access to its electronic catalogs and digital collections, estimated at approximately 30,000 books, magazines, press clippings, reprints, posters, photographs, auction lists, booklets, exhibition invitations, documents and indexed articles, as well as audiovisual material.

National Good Practices

- **National Museum of Contemporary Art – EMST** (application, where the visitor has the opportunity to get to know his works and discover contemporary art).

- **The Virtual Educational Museum of the National Opera (**a digital depiction of the fascinating world of the unique Greek lyric theater, from its beginning in 1939 until today. It currently has more than 11,000 exhibits.)

- **MOMus, the Metropolitan Organization of Museums of Fine Arts of Thessaloniki** (recommends daily selected works from its exhibitions and collections with the MOMus Resilience Project)

National Good Practices

- **Benaki Museum.** The benaki.org website offers 360˚ virtual tours of all the rooms and hundreds of works of art with audio tours in six languages

- **The Museum of Cycladic Art** has prepared a series of online activities for adults.

- The Ministry of Culture and Sports introduced a new **Cultural Platform**, digitalculture.gov.gr, to inform and connect citizens with daily cultural happenings in Greece and abroad and hosting all aforementioned content.

Other cultural areas

- **Athens Concert Hall (**music from the big concert halls of Europe, through the website of the Concert Hall on Facebook. A collaboration of the Athens Concert Hall with the European Concert Hall Organization (ECHO).

- **Thessaloniki Film Festival (**The Thessaloniki Film Festival screens for free to the public)

- **National Theater (**The Digitized Archive of the National Theater includes in its collections rare material, from 1932 to 2005. Performance programs, newspaper clippings, photographic material, audio documentaries (since 1955), videotapes (since 1994) and musical scores.

- **National Library (**offers the public the Electronic Reading Room, **a new digital service,** which enables certified users to read free e-books in Greek, for a specific period of time, wherever they are, through the computer, tablet or smartphone .

Policy initiatives

- The Ministry of Culture and Sports issued **a specific call for digital culture projects**, especially those that enable remote access to culture. (EUR 800K)

Region of Western Greece

- In regional level , there are **few official initiatives** that support access at places of cultural interest via digital means.

- Many initiatives derive from the institutions themselves, e.g Ancient Olympia Archaeological site and Museum organizes online digital presentations to schools and important dates (the "Museums Day")

- A call (sub. date 22/1/2021 to 26/3/2021) aimed to fund (25M€) projects aiming at the development, organization, documentation, management and promotion of **digital content** of tangible and intangible monuments, collections, items, archives and cultural sites, dating from 1830 onwards, as well as the development and availability of relevant electronic services to the public.

Programme " Digital System of multilevel promotion of history & cultural heritage of Western Greece"

Creation of the portal portal.westerngreece2021.gr, concentrating a vast number of information concerning :

- The promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of the Region of Western Greece.

- Presentation of three thousand (3,000) points of interest in the Region of Western Greece.

- Promotion of cultural sites in an interactive map.

- Historical events of the period of the Greek Revolution and their separation into national and local events. The Album is available on the portal

Closing

- Its is more than important the regional authorities to support initiatives dealing with the digitization of natural and cultural heritage
- The core thematic (cultural heritage) of our region focuses on the Museums and Archaeological Sites
- The Region and the corresponding organisations were not ready and prepared for the huge need of digital services (easier for museums, more difficult for archaeological sites)
- The continuation of CD-ETA project will definitely provide us new ideas and suggestions for further support of digitization of Natural &Cultural heritage