



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Commission report finds one million hours of European film locked away in cans & cupboards**

A new European Commission report has found most European film heritage institutions have not yet adapted to the digital revolution and are not yet able to preserve film digitally. Some of our current films are being lost to future generations forever, just like those of the silent era, where only 10% survived. At the same time films of the early digital era – because of formatting and interoperability issues – also risk being lost forever.

New technologies open the door for people to enjoy one million hours of European film, currently locked away in cans in the archives. Yet only 1.5% of European film heritage is commercially or freely accessible to the public.

European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes said: *"It is ridiculous that our film heritage is invisible in the 21st century. Culture is the heart of Europe, and film is at the apple heart of culture. I am determined to bring this film legacy online and will make a proposal in 2013 that helps Member States and stakeholders to join forces to get films online."*

Only 1.5% of European film heritage is digitised. Digitisation is a pre-condition for online access. Without it, films lovers will continue to miss out on the opportunities offered by the online world. This is not because of lack of interest. Two million films have been viewed on the EU-funded online platform "Europa Film Treasures" since 2009, for example.

Current obstacles to digitisation include scarce national and private funding and the complexity of rights clearance (both time and money).

Sweden and UK are considered to be examples of current best practice.

### **Background**

The Commission considers that Member States should include film heritage in their national digitisation strategies and archival policies; one outcome of this should be greater film content on the [Europeana](#) portal. Innovative financing and collecting techniques need to be developed; for example, further research into scanning technologies for archival films could result in a reduction of digitisation costs. In addition, resources, facilities and skills for the preservation of both analogue and digital film need to be improved.

The European Parliament and Council adopted a Film Heritage Recommendation on 16 November 2005.

The first implementation report on the Film Heritage Recommendation was published in August 2008 and the second one in July 2010. This third report of 2012 analyses the

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reports received from Member States in reply to a Commission questionnaire and the national reports are available on line in English and in their original language.

In January 2012, the Commission published a study on a "[Digital Agenda for European Film Heritage](#)", carried out by independent experts.

The Commission adopted in October 2011 a Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation. The Recommendation applies to Europe's cultural memory regardless of the format in which it is imbedded, including film heritage.

The Commission will, as parallel actions, conduct a stakeholder dialogue on certain urgent copyright-related issues in 2013, including problems relative to the preservation and online availability of film heritage items, and assess whether to propose legislation in 2014 modernising the Directive 2001/29/EC on copyright in the information society, including on exceptions and limitations (see [IP/12/1394](#) and [MEMO/12/950](#)).

### **For more information**

The [3rd Implementation report](#) on the Film Heritage Recommendation

Neelie Kroes' [website](#)

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