



europaena  
network  
association



A seated man sharpening a quill pen, Wellcome Collection, United Kingdom, CC BY

# ENA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN 2021



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This document addresses strategic priorities for the Europeana Network Association in 2021 and beyond, as approved by the ENA Members Council in March 2021. The topics identified below are arranged in order of priority based on an assessment done by the ENA Members Board and Members Council.

The agreed set of prioritised strategic issues is valid for 2021 but their scheduling and duration is subject to further discussion and is likely to last for more than a year in most cases. It is anticipated that the strategic plan will be updated annually on a rolling basis. The ENA Communities' visions and annual Work Plans will continue to be a key influence in this and a vehicle for ongoing delivery of the ENA strategic priorities.

## **Supporting capacity building and digital transformation**

Important work is underway to define the main fields of competence where the Europeana Initiative can be most active through its ecosystem in promoting digital transformation. Once completed, this will be part of a process, involving other organisations, which delivers a comprehensive package of capacity building support to cultural heritage institutions of all types and sizes. By aligning with this, ENA can assume an important role in developing and strengthening these capacities through calling on its wide-reaching and embedded pool of active members, who share knowledge and learn from each other across the cultural heritage domains and grassroots communities to help Europeana's mission succeed, possibly supported with professional certification. In support of these goals, representation of the role of ENA at the European Commission, in the recently changed governance conditions, should be maintained.

## **Harnessing the potential of ENA members**

Identifying, encouraging and channelling the potential, skills and enthusiasm of active participants within ENA's 2800+ membership is a prerequisite for a sustainable and active network, and an area where increased attention is needed. However, not all members will be equally active, and needs of more passive members need to be taken into account. An environment sensitive to the conditions of those already involved is equally important, especially in the light of their experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic. Improving the 'customer journey' for new members and retention strategies for older ones through Europeana Pro and other means are a central ingredient.

## **Inclusivity and Diversity (I&D)**

A more diverse and inclusive representation, recognising key social and cultural issues and needs, is critical for the success and growth of ENA, becoming an integral part of all we do, rather than a separate strategy with isolated activities. Ownership and management of the direction of diversity initiatives by members of the communities involved should be a tenet for the outcomes of our I&D approach. Initiatives are needed



to identify people from 'marginalised' communities and engage their involvement. Relevant KPIs could be indicated in ENA's annual Activity plan and their outcomes described in their annual reports. ENA should also continue its support for the Europeana Foundation (EF) in their I&D actions, working closely with the Community and Partner Engagement team and the cross-Initiative Task Force on I&D as well as the Europeana Aggregators' Forum (EAF). Europeana is inclusive and non-discriminatory by intention but is also dependent on legacy content and metadata aggregated from cultural heritage institutions and how it is described and curated.

## Collaboration - ENA, Europeana Foundation, Europeana Aggregators' Forum and wider networks

There is scope for developing the benefits of the EF-ENA relationship, which should be seen as a two-way street. EF can support the digital transformation of cultural heritage institutions via ENA and EAF. ENA and its communities offer an ideal way to increase the impact of Europeana Initiative's digital transformation mission, among both small and large cultural heritage institutions and their networks. Similarly, with important players and 'neighbouring' networks outside the EI and cultural heritage in general, such as DARIAH (digital humanities), Europa Nostra and EUN (schools education). Together with EAF, ENA can provide a rich source of expertise to support the knowledge pool which exists within the relatively small group of staff which delivers EF strategy. Areas where EF could benefit from expert support from within the ENA should be identified. To enable all this, the information flow and collaborative efforts between ENA, EF and EAF should be further optimised.

## Transparency, accountability and democracy

Optimal transparency of planning, communication and decision-making is crucial for success and a positive alignment (and perception) of this is vital for harmonious relations between the various mechanisms of ENA (Management Board, Members Council, Communities and wider membership), with EF and EAF and in order to collaborate with the EF [Advisory Board and Supervisory Board](#). The processes and mechanisms for information sharing and participation in decision-making between ENA Management Board and Members Council and their respective functions in initiating, approving and being accountable for strategies and initiatives should be reassessed and further clarified. Accountability for ENA actions falls to the ENA Management Board, as the leadership of ENA and its Members Council.

## Funding and payments

The existing ENA budget has, for various reasons, been underspent in recent years and re-allocation of travel funding in circumstances where there are fewer physical meetings is rational. In due course, the possibility exists that increasing the effectiveness and impact of ENA in the context of the Europeana Initiative may entail somewhat higher costs, depending on the objectives and actions it is required to undertake. The evidence



and business case for this should be assessed, before the next round of Europeana funding, in the light of the growing maturity of ENA. ENA depends primarily on voluntary effort and this is unlikely to change. A combination of mutual interests through pooling and sharing of professional expertise is at its root. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where forms of payment in return for professional guidance and effort are justified and these cases should be further assessed in the context of the funding guidelines for ENA, which operates within the Europeana Initiative framework.

## ENA Mechanisms

The current ENA mechanisms ([Communities](#), [Working Groups](#), [Task Forces](#)) provide a sound operational basis. The Communities are increasingly the driving force for activities. Their evolution alongside EF to achieve further strategic impact is an ongoing consideration, for instance through improved collaboration between community leaders and their members, engaging volunteers more productively, considering the initiation of a community platform, and innovating online negotiation, discussion and decision-making formats. Once the opportunities provided by the existing mechanisms are more extensively utilised, their efficiency and effectiveness should be evaluated and further enhanced by the introduction of new and innovative actions considered in order to address identified problems: for example through relevant KPIs in ENA's annual Activity Plans with outcomes described in ENA Annual Reports.



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