

Good morning to everyone.

It is a pleasure for us to host the fourth NAPLE Forum Conference in our city, and to share these three days with all of you. I've worked enthusiastically with all the Subdirectorate team to organize this event, and I hope it will be a success with Barbro's permission, who set very high standards last year, and to whom I would like to thank her invaluable collaboration.

We hope that your stay in Madrid will be very pleasant, as well as fruitful. Your hotel is located next to the Ministry, so you will not lose time in transfers. It is also close to the two main avenues of the capital: Paseo de la Castellana, that connects the National Library and the triangle of museums, (which includes the Prado, the Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofía) with Atocha train Station on one hand, and with Alcalá street and Gran Vía, on the other. There is a great cultural and leisure offer in Madrid that gives you a lot of possibilities. We are at your disposal for any information you might need.

As you can see in your program, we have speakers of different European countries who will present their projects related to digital resources. The Spanish participation, as you can suppose, is higher this year. We have tried to include projects reflecting our rich linguistic and cultural variety. Therefore, we have projects from the Autonomous Regions of Andalucía, Catalonia, Basque country and Galicia. Our Subdirectorate for Libraries Coordination will also present a new cooperative project: Architecture and libraries.

In July, we had a change in our government and now we have a new Minister of Culture who, as the former minister did, has expressed his complete support to the celebration of this conference and to the development and improvement of the Spanish public libraries: infrastructures, holdings, services, etc. He has also expressed his commitment to this year's NAPLE motto: the creation of digital resources promoting the use of international standards in all our pro-

jects, with a view to our future participation in the European digital library.

In the former NAPLEs conference held in Helsinki, I had the opportunity to present the most important cooperative projects that the Ministry of Culture was carrying out. At that moment, we were taking our first steps for the creation of the Virtual Library of Bibliographic Heritage, the result of an important effort of the Ministry of Culture to preserve and make accessible, as wide as possible, the bibliographic heritage kept in all kind of libraries in Spain. Today this project is a reality, and I would like you to watch a very short video at the end of my speech that will allow you to appreciate its scope and content.

This project is settled in the strategic lines of the Ministry of Culture and, therefore, is the result of the cooperation with the Autonomous Regions. This procedure has already proved its efficacy in both the Virtual Library of Historical Press, (allowing the search of three million and a half pages from fifteen Autonomous Regions and other entities both public and private), and the Directory and Harvester of Digital Resources, (which allows the user to consult one hundred and forty one projects of digitisation and to access two hundred thousand digital resources of all kinds).

The Virtual Library of Bibliographic Heritage includes a data deposit based on Open Archives Initiative, a fundamental standard for the construction of the European Library and its maximum visibility on the Internet. The whole of the regulations used for the construction of this virtual library correspond to the Initiative I-2010 promoted by the European Union in the 7th Framework Programme. This programme, as you know, considers this digital libraries flagship initiative as one of the three strategic aspects that are essential for the creation of the society and technology of information in Europe, applying strictly the Lisbon Agenda for the development and employment.

This year, there is also another novelty in regard to the economic effort and the application of a line of subventions that the Ministry of Culture offers to a broad group of projects aiming to create and transform digital resources. These projects may be elaborated by all the Administrations as well as non-profit organisations.

This way, during the next few months, a number of digital or virtual libraries will be created in the whole of Spain and the use of the already existing digital resources on the web will be promoted as much as possible by applying the international rules.

Our Subdirectorate is also integrating itself in the EDLocal Project, a theme we will also have the chance to discuss during this Conference, at our General Assembly.

From a technical point of view, the Ministry of Culture has also taken the first steps in the projects already mentioned towards the preservation of the present and future digital resources, to avoid the volatility that sometimes comes with the use of the new technologies.

All the actions and projects already mentioned are not being carried out in an isolated way. They correspond to a command figuring in our recently approved new Act of Libraries, where different subsequent regulations are foreseen, among which we could emphasize the one creating the Council for Library Cooperation. After months of working with other administrations, universities and all kinds of entities responsible for library matters, a draft text has been

approved. It is right now being processed and probably will be ready before the end of this year. It will make possible a narrower cooperation based in official regulations and not only in the good will of librarians.

The Council consists of various comities representing the different types of libraries and both politicians and librarians, will take part in it.

This law defines two main objectives for the Ministry of Culture policy: to develop libraries and to promote the equal access to their collections and services so that everyone, no matter his conditions or place of living, has the same opportunities to use the library services.

All the projects and actions above mentioned correspond to these two objectives: with the creation of the Council for Library Cooperation, the cooperative projects, the line of subventions to create digital resources, etc..., cooperation structures are created favouring the development of the Spanish libraries on the whole, stimulating the technological advance and improving the services that the libraries may offer to the society, promoting the equal access to their collections.

Welcome again and thank you so much for being here.

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