**Annex. Estonia’s positions on the long-term preservation of digital heritage**

To shape Estonia’s positions, a digital preservation working group was convened under the Digital Cultural Heritage Council of the Ministry of Culture. The group included experts from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, and cultural heritage institutions. The working group explored potential solutions, described crisis scenarios, mapped the cultural heritage data sets and data requirements for long-term preservation of digital cultural heritage and identified the essential elements that need further analysis for cross-border solution at EU level.

* We consider it important that **the European Commission develop together with the member states a unified cross-border solution at the EU level and within the EU financial framework for the preservation of digital heritage**. Such solution would have to run on European service providers, which might further innovation and empower new European business models. The aim of such a solution is to ensure the long-term preservation of the most valuable part of Europe’s digital heritage and the related information systems. If something happens to our cultural heritage within our country, there is little that can be done afterward to save it. In the darkest scenario, some member states might be forced to manage their heritage assets from exile, providing the documentation of war crimes, destruction and theft. Therefore, a solution for preserving digital heritage and its related information systems outside national borders must be developed and implemented as soon as possible. Only in this way can we ensure that our digital heritage is preserved and remains accessible, regardless of global crises or domestic situations.
* We wish for **the technical framework of the solution to include common data exchange standards, metadata compatibility, and distributed storage solutions, and to ensure interoperability** between national digital heritage preservation systems. The goal is to enable rapid data recovery in crisis situations and ensure the security and confidentiality of cultural heritage data.
* **The pan-European preservation service must ensure the sustainable long-term preservation of unique digital heritage and related information systems, and the capability to launch and provide priority digital heritage-related services outside national borders within the EU**. Using Estonia’s proposed model as an example, the pan-European preservation service could consist of two parallel tiers:

1. High-quality preservation copies of digital heritage are stored in a different location outside national borders.
2. Priority information systems, along with access copies of digital heritage, are stored in a different location outside national borders and can be launched and operated to ensure the continuity of critical services.

We believe that developing a unified cross-border preservation solution for all EU member states may be more cost-effective and sustainable than if each member state were to develop its own solution. Most importantly, it is the only way we can securely preserve European heritage in a unified way. With a unified solution, member states and individual memory institutions would not need to maintain their own separate infrastructure, reducing duplication. A shared system allows for better resource use and cost-sharing. A unified solution also mitigates security risks, as common standards and principles are agreed upon and implemented, and the preservation service is distributed.

We call on the European Commission to **establish an ad-hoc working group** composed of representatives from member states to develop the solution and to ensure transparency, continuity, and the necessary resources for its work.

Furthermore, we call on the European Commission to **conduct a pilot project** that involves member states of various sizes and volumes of digital heritage to test the model in different cultural contexts.