Dear,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed funding level for the [common European data space for cultural heritage](https://www.dataspace-culturalheritage.eu/en) in the current draft of the Digital Europe Programme Work Plan 2025-2027, which is being developed by the European Commission in cooperation with Member States.

According to the Ministry of Culture of Estonia, this data space is a pivotal initiative for the cultural heritage sector, both at the European level and nationally.

The data space is instrumental in driving the digital transformation of Europe’s cultural sector, and fostering accessibility and reuse of cultural collections. It significantly enhances the online visibility and reach of Estonia’s cultural heritage, enabling a broader European audience to discover, engage with, and benefit from our cultural assets. Currently, Estonian cultural heritage institutions contribute over 750,000 digitised assets to Europeana.eu and the data space, underscoring our commitment to this flagship initiative.

The data space also supports the capacity building and networking of Estonian cultural heritage institutions and professionals. It plays a key role in standardising digitisation practices across Europe, promoting interoperability and openness. Additionally, by fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing, it helps accelerate the 3D digitisation of at-risk monuments and most visited heritage sites in Europe, in line with the objectives set forth in the European Commission's Recommendation of November 2021.

The indicative budget of €15 million (€7.5 million annually) proposed in the first draft of the DEP Work Plan is inadequate and does not meet the EU and Member States' shared ambitions for the data space. Additionally, it is regrettable that this draft does not allocate any funding for data space supporting projects, which are essential for the success of the data space and drive innovation and experimentation in areas like Artificial Intelligence and 3D.

Adequate funding for the common European data space for cultural heritage within the DEP Work Plan 2025-2027 is crucial to ensure its continued development and expansion. I urge the European Commission to allocate **€12 million annually for the core data space service** to ensure its operational capacity, long-term sustainability and lasting impact on both national and European cultural heritage sectors.

Additionally, the Work Plan must allocate **€2 million annually for data space supporting projects,** as no funding has been designated for this vital aspect thus far. Once this funding is secured, it is equally important to adjust the co-funding rate to a maximum of 25% from participating institutions. This adjustment is essential to reduce participation barriers for small and medium-sized organisations, which make up the majority of the heritage sector and were identified as key data space contributors in the 2021 Recommendation.

I trust the European Commission will provide the decisive support needed to secure adequate funding for the data space. This investment is crucial for realising our shared vision of a thriving, sustainable data space that delivers maximum benefits to the cultural heritage sector, Europe’s citizens, and our broader society and economy.