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**Solution of the long-term preservation of
digital cultural heritage in a location outside
the country's borders**

Honourable Executive Vice-President Virkkunen,

With my letter I would like to draw your attention to the urgent need to develop a sustainable, cross-border solution for the long-term preservation of Europe's digital cultural heritage against the backdrop of today's rapidly evolving challenges — from climate change to geopolitical instability.

Culture and cultural heritage play a pivotal role in shaping a shared sense of identity and enriching cultural diversity in the European Union. Therefore, they are essential for ensuring historical continuity between the past, present, and future. Estonia places great importance on the EU's sustained efforts to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage ecosystem. In this context, joint initiatives both at the EU and international levels have made significant contributions to the advancement and resilience of the sector.

We highly welcome the fact that the recently published **"European Preparedness Union Strategy"** has included **culture** and **culture institutions** to better anticipate and manage various crises and threats and to preserve the resilience of vital societal functions and the need to develop mutual resilience in the area of cultural heritage across the EU.

We strongly believe that long-term preservation of cultural heritage should be treated as vital societal function with a clear pan-European dimension. Preserving digital heritage across national borders should be addressed as part of the security, resilience of our societies, as well as crisis management. Also, the Eurobarometer survey published in early May 2025 revealed that 43% of Europeans believe that member states and the EU should work closely together to protect cultural heritage sites from war, climate change, and natural disasters.

We see an urgent need to ensure the sustainable long-term preservation of unique digital heritage and related information systems. This includes securing access and continuity services even when cultural heritage - both tangible and digital heritage - is at risk or has been destroyed in the home country by either natural disasters or man-made crisis. The ability to launch and operate priority digital heritage services from outside national borders must be guaranteed across the EU.

Given the complexity of the issue, a coordinated approach is needed. Estonian and other models already developed could serve as inspiration for further discussions in the EU. Enclosed with this letter are our more in-depth thoughts and proposals, grounded in national analysis and offered to encourage further reflection.

Estonia calls on the European Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, to explore the possibilities of developing a common cross-border preservation solution for digital heritage at the EU level through a dedicated EU working group to ensure the long-term preservation of the most valuable part of Europe's digital cultural heritage and the associated information systems. We highly welcome the fact that DG CONNECT has taken the initiative and is establishing such an ad-hoc working group. We believe that the working group should develop business requirements, methodology, and guidelines for member states to assess priority digital heritage. It should also estimate the potential scale, pricing model and a sustainability model of the solution. Furthermore, we call on the European Commission to conduct a pilot project during the development of the solution to ensure the model is tested in different cultural environments.

We remain open to dialogue and further engagement, and we sincerely hope to work together with the European Commission to find a common EU-level solution to this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

(signed digitally)

Heidy Purga
Minister of Culture



Additional recipients:

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