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From the European Directive to the National Strategy: Establishing an Ecosystem for Digital Cultural Heritage in Slovenia

The establishment of the European Data Space for Cultural Heritage is based on a European legal framework that links digital policy, culture, research, and intellectual-property protection. A key document is Directive (EU) 2019/1024 on open data and the re-use of public-sector information, which also requires cultural institutions (museums, libraries, archives) to make open data available for re-use without restrictions. The Directive introduces the concept of 'high-value datasets,' the re-use of which brings significant benefits for society, the environment, and the economy. Cultural-heritage data are included in this category. In line with the European Strategy for Data (2020) and Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1970 on a common European data space for cultural heritage, the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH) is being developed, which by 2029 will provide secure storage, interconnection, and access to heritage data at EU level.

The National Strategy for Digital Cultural Heritage, prepared within the AID HCH project, provides the framework for these activities. It aims to establish an open, interoperable, and sustainable ecosystem that will enable the publication, long-term accessibility, and re-use of data. It emphasises the importance of adopting metadata standards and schemes and ensuring interoperability between institutions, supporting research with artificial intelligence, developing data literacy, and engaging the public. Equally important is the provision of ethical and legal frameworks to protect sensitive content and enable the responsible use of data. Alignment with European practices will allow Slovenia to strengthen the sustainable use of digital-heritage resources while increasing their scientific value and societal accessibility.

An important contribution to these goals will be DIGILAB within E-RIHS (European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science), designed to establish research infrastructure for the creation of digital content and the development of the data space. Slovenia participates as a member of the consortium through E-RIHS.si, which since 2018 has been connecting national research and heritage institutions. A key contribution of the Slovenian node will be the development of DIGILAB, where the National and University Library (NUK) will take part in high-quality digitisation, the design of metadata schemes, the system for assigning persistent identifiers, and the creation of a portal for data access. In this way, Slovenian heritage science will be directly integrated into European research and data flows.

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